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**WORKING-CLASS LEISURE IN ENGLISH TOWNS 1945 to 1960,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COVENTRY AND BOLTON**

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## Synopsis

The popular perception of the years 1945 to 1960 is that they constituted a transitional period from austerity to affluence. Material gains in the post-war years gradually increased, enhanced by full-employment, the establishment of the welfare state and a growing quantity of consumer goods. At first glance, it seems that working-class people's non-material life, too, greatly changed. 'Traditional' leisure such as cinema-, pub- and football-going declined, replaced by more consumption-oriented, home- and family-centred leisure, such as television watching, do-it-yourself and pleasure motoring. Critics have seen this was symptomatic of the erosion of 'traditional' working-class-life styles, underlined by more communal and solidaristic social relationships.

A close examination of post-war leisure in two working-class towns questions the above dichotomy, and shows the significant continuity and diversity of people's leisure patterns. These were often deeply divided according to gender, age, life-stage and locality. Despite the rapidly changing trends of commercial leisure, and the increased intervention of the public sector in social life, the self-determined nature of working-class leisure does not seem to have been eroded. On the contrary, the general affluence of post-war Britain seems to have contributed in a modest way to increased leisure opportunities in which people could express their personal and social identity with less hesitation than before.

## Contents

	Page
List of Tables	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Abbreviations	vi
Introduction	vii
<b><u>PART I: National Trends</u></b>	
Chapter 1: Trends in Leisure, 1945-60	1
Chapter 2: The Labour Governments and Leisure, 1945-51	84
Chapter 3: The Conservative Governments and Leisure, 1951-60	131
<b><u>PART II: Case Studies</u></b>	
Chapter 4: Introduction - Coventry and Bolton	175
Chapter 5: Municipal and Commercial Provision in Leisure, Coventry, 1945-51	194
Chapter 6: Municipal and Commercial Provision in Leisure, Bolton, 1945-51	232
Chapter 7: Associational and Home-Based Leisure, Coventry and Bolton, 1945-51	265
Chapter 8: Municipal and Commercial Provision in Leisure, Coventry, 1950s	298
Chapter 9: Municipal and Commercial Provision in Leisure, Bolton, 1950s	349
Chapter 10: Associational and Home-Based Leisure, Coventry and Bolton, 1950s	404
Conclusion	454
Appendix	465
Bibliography	481



List of Tables

1:1	Average earnings of male workers, and the cost of living, 1938-1950.	1
1:2	Average earnings of male workers, and retail prices, 1950-1960.	2
1:3	Average weekly working hours actually worked among manual workers, 1938-1960	5
1:4	Average holidays with pay, manual workers, 1951-1960	6
1:5	Consumers' expenditure at 1958 prices, 1946-1960	7
1:6	Percentage distribution of consumers' expenditure at current prices	8
1:7	Cinema admissions and takings, 1939-1960	11
1:8	Frequency of cinema-going by sex, 1947	12
1:9	Frequency of cinema-going by class, 1947	12
1:10	Frequency of cinema-going by age, 1947	13
1:11	Frequency of cinema-going by sex, 1959-1960	13
1:12	Frequency of cinema-going by social grades, 1959-1960	14
1:13	Frequency of cinema-going by age, 1959-1960	14
1:14	Changing distribution of cinema ownership, 1950-1960	16
1:15	Attendances at Cricket County Championship matches, 1948-1960	27
1:16	Total estimated annual amounts staked on totalisators and pools, 1938-1950	30
1:17	Membership of organisations for outdoor activities, 1950 and 1960	44
1:18	Distribution of holiday travel, 1951-1960	66
2:1	Annual film remittances from U.K. to U.S.A., 1939-1949	104
4:1	Average weekly earnings of motor vehicle workers, 1947-1953	179
4:2	Average actual weekly working hours, the Standard Motor Company, 1947-1953	182
4:3	Average weekly hours actually worked by manual workers in engineering and textiles, 1938-1960	187
4:4	Average weekly earnings of the manual workers in engineering and textiles, 1938-1960	188
5:1	The number of the branch libraries and evening centres in Coventry, 1943-1950	198
5:2	The polling results of municipal trades Bill	217
8:1	Paid adult membership of local community centres, 1952 and 1960	306
8:2	Annual cinema admissions per head of population in Midland region, 1950/51 and 1954	325
9:1	Annual cinema admissions per head of population in the North Western region, 1950/51 and 1954	381
9:2	Net profits for the year ended 30th September, 1945 to 1958, Magee, Marshall and Company Ltd.	390

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## Abbreviations

BCLA: Bolton Central Library, Archive and Local Studies  
Section  
*BEN: Bolton Evening News*  
*BJG: Bolton Journal and Guardian*  
BSSSL: Bolton Sunday School Social League  
CBB: County Borough of Bolton  
*CET: Coventry Evening Telegraph*  
CRO: Coventry City Record Office  
*CS: Coventry Standard*  
CWSA: Coventry Works Sports Association  
GEC: General Electric Company  
*GF: Green Final*  
*H.C. Debs: Hansard, House of Commons Debates*  
*H.L. Debs: Hansard, House of Lords Debates*  
LEA: Local Education Authority  
MoE: Ministry of Education  
MRC: Modern Record Centre, University of Warwick  
PEP: Political and Economic Planning  
PRO: Public Record Office

## Introduction

In the last two decades, historical research on leisure in Britain has been expanded. One of their shared objectives of historians has been to relate major changes in leisure to wider social changes, particularly industrial development and urbanisation. Historians broadly agree that during the course of the 19th century, pre-industrial leisure and custom had been gradually replaced by a new modern leisure culture. The social history of leisure grew out of labour history and focused its attention on working-class popular culture.<sup>1</sup>

In examining state suppression of 'vulgar' popular pastimes in the mid-19th century, or middle-class attempts to reform the life-styles of the new urban working-class by providing 'rational recreation' in later periods, historians have shown the existence of relatively strong autonomous leisure worlds in the urban working-class.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, in an attempt to explain the 'transformation' in modern working-class politics and consciousness of the late 19th century, Stedman Jones argued that the new working-class leisure, exemplified by music hall in particular, was part of a 'culture of consolation' which facilitated the re-making of them into a more conformist group.<sup>3</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm made similar points. 'Traditional' working-class culture, embodied in the increasingly commercial forms of urban popular leisure activities, was well established by the end of the 19th century. Hobsbawm went on to argue that this 'traditional' working-class culture finally collapsed

during the prosperous 1950s. The rise and fall of the popularity of commercial spare time activities, such as cinemas, professional football matches, holiday trips to Blackpool, dance halls and the popular press, were suggested as reliable indicators of the rise and fall of the 'traditional' working class.<sup>4</sup>

Historical studies of leisure have been concentrated on the 19th century. Although work on the inter-war years is now on the increase, there are few studies of the period after 1945. The changing nature of the post-war working class has been the subject not for historians, but for sociologists, political scientists, cultural studies experts, or social commentators. In the late 1950s they began to air the observation that the old social fabric of British society, class structure in particular, had significantly changed or been modified to become something new.

In 1957, Richard Hoggart, while observing that the 'resilience' of an older, decent way of life remained among the working-class, warned that 'mass culture' increasingly undermined it.<sup>5</sup> Ferdynand Zweig, who had examined various aspects of working-class life at the end of the forties,<sup>6</sup> did a comparative survey ten years later. His main conclusion was that working-class life was moving towards 'new middle-class values and middle-class existence'.<sup>7</sup> Goldthorpe and others, while rejecting the 'embourgeoisement' thesis suggested by Zweig and others,<sup>8</sup> agreed that some 'convergence' had taken place. The new affluent workers increasingly had an 'instrumental' view of

work and adopted a 'privatised' (home- and family centred) life style.<sup>9</sup> In these studies leisure was a central topic. The authors commonly examined various aspects of leisure such as working-class sociability with others, their membership of clubs and associations, and their interests in hobbies.

Social scientists tend to assume that their findings of a more 'privatised' life style among working-class people are a new phenomenon of late 1950s Britain. They came to this conclusion because they accept the mythologised solidaristic image of the pre-war working-class. Their studies, dealing only with a specific historical moment, are likely to overlook long-term trends. On the other hand, without any close examination of the post-war period, historians tend to assume that the so-called 'traditional' working-class life style was somehow eroded because of the growth in material affluence which developed in the late 1950s. There is an underlying assumption that culture and lifestyle would automatically change if material circumstances improved.

Although studies of inter-war Britain which challenge the image of 'traditional' working-class leisure have started to appear,<sup>10</sup> no work has investigated carefully whether working-class leisure did significantly change with the general prosperity of the 1950s. This study aims to begin that process. Its main object is to explore the chief aspects of working-class leisure between 1945 and 1960, in order to re-examine the idea that working-class life styles and culture were transformed from the 'traditional' to a new

form by the end of the 1950s. More specifically, it questions the assumption that 'traditional' working-class leisure, which was allegedly concentrated in older commercial forms and experienced in a more communal way, was replaced by a more privatised, home- and family-centred experience as a result of post-war affluence. The study proceeds via two case studies, in which the leisure worlds of workers in post-war Coventry and Bolton are explored and compared.

Coventry was an industrial city in the West Midlands dominated by the vehicle and engineering industry. After 1945, it continued to be prosperous, often called a 'boom' town. Because of continuous migration into the city seeking jobs and higher wages, its population was cosmopolitan and young. Bolton, on the other hand, was an old established textile town in Lancashire, though after the First World War, its industrial composition became more diverse. Despite the proximity to Manchester, Bolton and its people maintained their own identity.<sup>11</sup> Post-war Bolton was less prosperous than Coventry, but its unemployment rates remained low despite the steady decline of cotton. Both Coventry and Bolton were predominantly working-class. My initial expectation was that there would be differences in the leisure experiences in the two places, the one, one of the most 'affluent' towns and the other, a relatively stable 'traditional' working-class community. A detailed account of the economic and social backgrounds of the two towns will be described in the introduction to Part II.

In one sense, this is a local study of the leisure worlds of two towns in England in the years of austerity and then prosperity 1945-60. Major leisure activities and their post-war trends in both towns will be described in detail. However, the study also aims to explore the wider social contexts in which the two towns existed. Without placing the local studies in a national frame, a balanced picture of people's leisure could not be created. Thus, the present study spends many pages providing an overview of national trends in leisure. It also examines in some detail the changing trends on the supply side of leisure including the state, local government, commercial sectors and voluntary organisations.

Methodologically, instead of the employment of oral history, often very effective in revealing the subjective point of view, only written sources are used. This deficiency was mostly keenly felt in the Bolton case study, particularly in the area of home-based leisure when the archival sources are weak. However, this shortcoming is compensated by consulting both the national picture and the experience of Coventry. Moreover, an exhaustive study of available written materials provides a wider and more balanced picture than interviewing a small sample of people.

Something also should be said about the word, leisure. This study will not cover every aspect of leisure. It focuses on so-called leisure activities. A loose working definition of leisure would be that it is an opportunity, free from work and family obligation, to do something one pleases. Of course, some leisure activities, such as



gardening and do-it-yourself, have an element of obligation, but unlike daily washing, cooking or cleaning, they are not engaged in out of necessity.

Chapter 1 examines major national trends in leisure. It starts with a summary of trends in earnings, working hours and national patterns of expenditure on leisure. It describes first, the trends in commercial leisure, then leisure in associational forms, and finally leisure at home and around the family. Each trend is illustrated by statistics wherever available. In the following two chapters, Government involvement in leisure is described. Chapter 2 deals with the Labour Government between 1945 and 1951, and in Chapter 3, the actions and attitudes of the Conservative Government towards leisure in the 1950s are examined. A lack of historical or social studies on the role of the state in leisure in the forties and fifties suggests that no significant state intervention took place before the sixties.<sup>12</sup> The Labour Government, which was busy implementing a major programme of reforms, involving health, housing and education in a context of economic bankruptcy, had neither the time nor money to do much about people's leisure. However, close examination shows that Labour intervened in a wider-ranging sphere of leisure than hitherto assumed. The attitudes of Conservative governments towards leisure significantly changed by the late 1950s. The role of central Government was often decisive in determining the level of local provision of facilities.

The second part of the thesis is the local study. After briefly describing the general social and economic backgrounds of both Coventry and Bolton in the introduction to Part II, the experiences of the post-war forties in those towns will be described. Chapters 5 and 6 look at leisure provided by local government and the commercial sector in each town. In Chapter 7, more informal aspects of leisure, leisure in associational forms and leisure at home in both Coventry and Bolton, are described. Chapters 8 to 10 move on to the 1950s. The pattern of these chapters is identical to those on the forties.

Local government was a main provider of recreational facilities for both the young and adults. Although the extent of their leisure services was limited mainly by financial constraints imposed both centrally and locally, local governments' involvement in leisure greatly increased after 1945. This was true in both places, although what was actually done differed considerably. Post-war trends in commercial leisure were found to be similar in Coventry and Bolton. Older forms like cinemas, football, greyhound racing, and pubs commonly experienced some decline, from a peak in the immediate post-war years. Choice in the commercial leisure sector increased especially after 1951.

An examination of the forties and fifties shows how diverse and complex were the leisure worlds and people's experience of them. Many leisure activities were unevenly distributed, especially according to age, gender and life- and family-cycle stage. It is true that in both towns the

decline of some 'traditional' leisure took place, and that new and more varied forms of leisure facilities and activities emerged. However, both case studies also revealed the persistent vitality of many voluntary associations, which throws doubt on the notion that working-class leisure became privatised or more consumption-oriented than before. While the present study does not deny the importance of home- and family-centred leisure, it argues that the phenomenon was not new and a product of the late 1950s, but was of long-standing. It had probably existed in the inter-war years, and it was certainly evident even in the immediate austere post-war period, between 1945 and 1951, when the so-called 'traditional' leisure activities like cinema-going or watching football reached the peak of their popularity.

- 1 See, P. Bailey, 'Leisure, Culture and the Historian: Reviewing the First Generation of Leisure Historiography in Britain', *Leisure Studies*, vol. 8 (1989), pp. 107-27. See also, H. Cunningham, 'Leisure and Culture', in F. M. L. Thompson, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, vol. 2: *People and their Environment* (Cambridge, 1990).
- 2 For example, see, H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c1780-c1880* (1980); P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the contest for Control, 1830-1885* (1978).
- 3 G. Stedman Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', in his *Language of Class. Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983). This article was firstly published in 1974.
- 4 E. J. Hobsbawm, 'The Formation of British Working-Class Culture', in his *Worlds of Labour* (1984). The article was originally written in 1979. See also his, *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* (1981).
- 5 R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957).
- 6 F. Zweig, *The British Worker* (1952).
- 7 F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (1961), p. ix.
- 8 On various literature which supported the embourgeoisement thesis, see, J. Goldthorpe and others, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 1-29.
- 9 Goldthorpe and others, *The Affluent Worker* (1971).
- 10 For example, A. Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty* (Buckingham, 1992) argues that in Salford between 1900 and 1939 informal leisure was more important than the commercial.
- 11 See, S. P. B. Mais, *The English Scene Today* (1948), pp. 209-16.
- 12 J. Wilson, *Politics and Leisure* (1988); I. P. Henry, *The Politics of Leisure Policy* (1993). Both texts hardly mention the roles of the public sector in the post-war forties and fifties.

**PART I**  
**National Trends**

## Chapter 1: Trends in Leisure, 1945-60

In this chapter, after describing trends in earnings, spare time and leisure expenditure, the main national leisure trends will be described in three separate sections: commercial leisure; associational forms of leisure; and leisure centred on home and around the family. Both the changing pattern of leisure experienced by working-class people and the developments of the post-war leisure industry will be described.

### 1. Some National Backgrounds

#### Trends in actual earnings

Throughout the post-war 1940s, the amount of earnings of the adult male manual workers in the United Kingdom rose consistently. The table below shows that the index of earnings increased more than that of the 'cost of living'.

**Table 1:1 Average earnings of male workers, and the cost of living (1938=100), 1938-1950.<sup>1</sup>**

year	weekly actual (s./d.)	earnings index	cost of living index	real weekly earnings index
1938	69/0	100	100	100
1945	120/4	180	148	121
46	117/5	190	150	126
47	125/9	203	160	126
48	136/0	220	173	127
49	141/4	229	178	128
50	148/1	240	184	130

The index for 'real weekly earnings' shows that adult wage earners, the main bread winners of average British

households, were definitely better off in the post-war period than in 1938. However, between 1946 and 1950, the rise in the real weekly earnings was very small.

The average weekly earnings of adult women workers showed similar trends. Although always considerably less than those of men, 32s. 6d. in 1938 had become 81s. 3d. in 1950, and increase of two and half time.<sup>2</sup> Young boys and girls in manual work also got their fair share of the rise in earnings. In 1938, boys under 21 earned 26s. 1d. weekly, while girls under 18 earned 18s. 6d.<sup>3</sup> In 1950, the former took home 62s. 7d., while the latter had 42s. 3d.

The following table shows the trends in earnings for adult male manual workers and retail prices (cost of living) in the 1950s.<sup>4</sup> In the first three years of the fifties, people's spending power was unchanged.

**Table 1:2 Average earnings of male workers, and retail prices (1950=100), 1950-1960.<sup>5</sup>**

year	actual weekly earnings (s./d.)	weekly earnings (index)	retail price	real weekly earnings (index)
1950	148/1	100	100	100
51	163/1	110	110	100
52	176/1	119	119	100
53	187/7	127	123	103
54	201/1	136	125	109
55	220/2	149	131	114
56	236/8	160	137	117
57	246/7	167	142	118
58	254/11	172	147	117
59	266/10	180	147	123
60	286/5	193	149	130

However, from 1953 onward, except for a slight fall between 1957 and 1958, the index of real weekly earnings moved upward faster than in the post-war 1940s. As in the 1940s, both women and young male workers experienced similar increases. So that by 1960, the earnings of women, boys and girls were 146s. 8d., 126s. 7d. and 95s., respectively.<sup>6</sup> Apart from gender and age, there were other elements of difference in the amount of earnings, such as the industry, occupation, skill grade and region. These differences will be explored in the case studies below.

What about were the average income of the manual working-class households? According to an official household expenditure survey conducted in 1953, the gross weekly income of nearly three quarters of households ranged from £8 to £20, with the majority (51 per cent) being between £8 and £14.<sup>7</sup> This means that the income of some working-class households were twice as much as the average earnings of male manual workers. However, the analysis of households by income of household and income of head of household shows that for the majority of working-class households the earnings of the head of the household was the single major source of income.<sup>8</sup> The fact that household income continued to be determined largely by the earnings level of the head of the household did not change in the 1950s.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that the post-war economic and political climate was in favour of lower income groups. According to studies on the distribution of income, compared



with the pre-war period, the actual income after deducting tax among the lower paid groups in Britain increased relative to that among higher paid groups.<sup>10</sup> This resulted from the introduction of more progressive income tax rates and was a trend largely continued in the 1950s. Although direct taxation became less progressive in this period, the changes were still considered 'slight'.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the post-war economic situation was favourable in both relative and absolute terms for working-class people.

### Hours

Between 1945 and the early 1960s, there were two occasions on which normal weekly working hours for the majority of manual workers were reduced. The first was the limited success of trade union demands for a 40 hour week. 'Normal working hours' were defined in collective agreements or governmental wage regulations. Beyond these overtime rates should be paid. The first reduction was made between 1946 and 1949, from 47 or 48 hours to 44 or 45 hours. The reduction was often accompanied by the introduction of a 5-day week. The second reduction started in the summer of 1959 in the general printing industry. By the end of 1961, 42 to 44 hours a week became common among manufacturing industries.<sup>12</sup> The Ministry of Labour estimated in the period of the first general reduction that about 9 million manual workers secured a reduction of just more than 3 hours each in their normal weekly working hours. In the second general reduction, about 12 million manual workers obtained about 2 hours.<sup>13</sup> However, as the following table shows,

reductions in actual working hours during the period were very much less.

**Table 1:3 Average weekly working hours actually worked among manual workers, 1938-1960.<sup>14</sup>**

year	adult men	adult women	boys under 21 years	girls under 18 years
1938	47.7	43.5	46.2	44.6
45	49.6	43.2	45.4	43.3
46	47.5	42.4	44.4	42.6
47	46.5	41.4	43.9	42.1
48	46.6	41.5	44.1	42.3
49	46.7	41.6	44.0	42.4
50	47.3	41.7	44.3	42.6
51	47.9	41.6	44.5	42.4
52	47.5	41.2	44.3	42.2
53	47.9	41.8	44.6	42.8
54	48.4	41.8	44.8	42.8
55	48.9	41.7	45.0	42.7
56	48.6	41.3	45.0	42.5
57	48.4	41.2	44.7	42.3
58	48.2	41.0	44.6	42.2
59	48.3	41.4	44.8	42.4
60	48.0	40.7	44.3	41.7

In the case of adult male workers, weekly hours actually worked increased slightly towards the second half of the 1950s. There is a study which shows that, compared with experiences in Holland, overtime working in Britain became a well established habit.<sup>15</sup> Although the introduction of a 5-day week was a gain, most reductions in normal working hours were actually rewarded in the form of increased overtime payments.

Another significant movement towards shorter working hours was the growth of holidays with pay among manual wage-earners. In March 1938, the official Committee on Holidays with Pay estimated that some 7.75 millions of the total of

18.5 million persons in employment, either of manual or non-manual work with no more than £250 income a year, were entitled to some form of holidays with pay.<sup>16</sup> Of these 7.75 million persons, however, only about 3 millions were estimated as manual wage earners. Then, the Holidays with Pay Act, 1938, was introduced. The Ministry of Labour estimated in September 1944 that some 10 million manual wage-earners now secured paid holidays by collective agreements or by statutory orders.<sup>17</sup> Although there was a great difference in the provision of paid holidays industry by industry, 6 to 12 days annual holiday with pay was the norm for the great majority of agreements.<sup>18</sup>

In 1946, between 11 and 12 million manual workers were entitled to paid holidays.<sup>19</sup> The majority of agreements guaranteed 12 days consisting of one week in summer and 6 public holidays.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 1:4 Annual holidays with pay (excluding usual 6 paid public holidays), manual workers, 1951-1960.<sup>21</sup>**

year	percentage of workers who have a basic holiday (weeks) of				
	(1 week)	(1 to 2)	(2)	(2 to 3)	(3 & over)
					(%)
1951	28	3	66	2	1
1955	-	1	96	2	1
1960	-	-	97	1	2

By April 1951, the provision of three weeks paid holiday had spread.<sup>22</sup> In May 1952, it was estimated that more than two-thirds of all wage earners, including shop assistants, enjoyed three weeks annual paid holiday.<sup>23</sup> By the middle of

the 1950s, as the Table 1:4 shows, two weeks annual summer holiday plus six paid public holidays became a nearly universal phenomenon for manual workers.

### Trends in consumer expenditure

How did people use their growing spending power? Did they spend more on leisure than before? What kind of spending patterns could be observed between 1946 and 1960? The Table 1:5 shows national expenditure on selected leisure items calculated at 1958 prices.

**Table 1:5 Consumers' expenditure at 1958 prices, 1946-1960.<sup>24</sup>**

	1946	1949	1952	1955	1958	1960
	(£ million)					
Beer	650	569	573	571	567	625
Wines & others	219	236	262	310	346	398
Cigarettes	859	714	778	847	903	959
Motoring	71	91	124	354	425	600
Furniture	169	300	274	319	362	401
Electrical goods	113	168	202	345	388	464
Books	38	42	44	46	51	57
Newspapers	115	140	138	141	140	136
Magazines	39	48	43	50	47	44
Miscellaneous						
Recreational goods	157	179	194	264	284	354
Cinema	190	167	146	130	85	63
Other entertainments	114	117	129	147	178	223

The most apparent feature was the sweeping decline in spending on cinema throughout the period, against general upwards trends on other items. Contrary to the case of beer, expenditure on wines, spirits, cider and other alcoholic

drinks, steadily increased throughout the period. Spending on entertainments other than cinema also steadily rose. Although there was a general reduction in consumption levels in the years 1951, 1952, 1956, caused by the Korean War and the Suez crisis, generally speaking, people spent more and more on consumer durables, particularly on motor cars and electrical goods. The constant rise in expenditure on miscellaneous recreational goods is also clear. However, while spending on books, newspapers and magazines increased in the 1940s, it failed to do so in the 1950s.

The Table 1:6 shows the percentage expenditure on the same consumer items, out of total consumers' expenditure at current prices.<sup>25</sup> It shows the pattern of the people's priority of spending, on a year by year basis.

**Table 1:6 Percentage distribution of consumers' expenditure at current prices.<sup>26</sup>**

	1946	1949	1952	1955	1958	1960
						(%)
Beer	7.3	5.9	4.9	4.1	3.7	3.3
Wines & others	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3
Cigarettes	7.1	7.0	6.6	6.0	6.0	6.0
Motor cars(new & second)	0.5	0.7	1.1	2.4	2.8	3.4
Furniture	1.5	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4
Electrical goods	1.3	1.6	2.0	2.6	2.5	2.6
Books	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Newspapers	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8
Magazines	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Miscellaneous Recreational goods	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0
Cinema	1.7	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.4
Other entertainments	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.3

Table 1:6 highlights some trends already observed in Table 1:5 more clearly, but on the other hand, it gives us different insights from those detected in the Table 1:5. For example, the decline of people's commitment not just to cinema but also to beer becomes apparent. The Table 1:6 also shows that the proportion of people's spending on cigarettes steadily declined during the period, while that on books, newspapers and magazines hardly changed. One interesting trend was the changing relationship in spending between durables: the commitment to motoring never fell; the commitment on furniture grew towards the late 1940s, but was gradually replaced by enthusiasm for electrical goods afterwards. In the second half of the fifties, spending on electrical goods itself stagnated. Finally, it was also clear that in the 1950s people started to spend proportionally more on various recreational goods and on entertainments other than cinema.

To get a broader picture of general trends in leisure spending, some combined figures might be useful. If we consider spending on reading matters, miscellaneous recreational goods, and all the entertainments combined together, the percentage expenditure on all these items steadily declined between 1946 and 1952. During the 1950s the figure remained almost unchanged. This suggests that people's spending priority on leisure goods and services was highest immediately after the war. On the other hand, the corresponding percentage figures of expenditure on durable goods, such as private motoring, electrical appliances and

furniture, increased by about two and a half times during the same period.<sup>27</sup>

The post-war 1940s was an exceptional period when people's spending habits were greatly distorted by the continuing wartime circumstances. Many wartime restrictions on production and consumption of consumer goods remained in force.<sup>28</sup> Because of the acute shortage of many commodities and the strict rationing of others, national expenditure on petty luxuries such as cigarettes and entertainments increased. On the other hand, because of the prolonged petrol rationing, it was only in the fifties that the post-war consumption level of private motoring exceeded the level of 1938.<sup>29</sup> It is little wonder that expenditure on entertainments started to fall a few years after the war, as supplies of various consumer goods, such as furniture and clothing increased. Thus, to some extent, the decline in people's spending on traditional leisure goods and services, as well as increased spending on modern leisure goods, could be seen largely as a returning movement towards normal peacetime spending habits.

## 2. Some Aspects of Commercial Leisure

### Cinema

How did cinema-going habits in Britain change in the post-war period? Table 1:7 shows the trend in admissions, gross takings and net takings after deducting the entertainments duty and levy. The all time peak in cinema attendances was recorded in 1946. 1,635,000 admission was as if each person in the country had visited the cinema 34 times. The main

background for this unprecedented popularity was the continuing wartime situation in the immediate post-war period: people had more money because of full employment and longer working hours, but there were not many goods and services on which to spend it. The mood of relaxation and celebration just after the war probably further contributed to the record admissions.

**Table 1:7 Cinema admissions and takings, 1939-1960.<sup>30</sup>**

year	admissions (million)	box office takings (£ million)	
		gross	net
1939	990	41.7	36.1
46	1,635	118.3	75.9
47	1,462	105.4	67.7
48	1,514	108.8	70.0
49	1,430	103.3	66.8
50	1,396	105.2	68.0
51	1,365	108.3	68.9
52	1,312	109.9	68.9
53	1,285	108.8	68.6
54	1,276	110.0	71.4
55	1,182	105.8	69.8
56	1,101	104.2	67.6
57	915	92.9	62.6
58	755	83.4	63.9
59	601	69.3	57.6
60	515	64.3	58.2

The popularity of cinema did not decline much at first. In the early 1950s, the total amount of cinema admissions accounted for no less than 83 per cent of all taxable commercial entertainments, and the British were the most frequent cinema-goers in the world in 1950.<sup>31</sup> By 1960, however, the number of the total admissions had dropped by nearly 70 per cent.



Who were the cinema-goers? There was a market research survey made in the first five months of 1947 involving 10,200 adults over the age of 16. The following tables show the results.

**Table 1:8 Frequency of cinema-going by sex, 1947.<sup>32</sup>**

sex	twice a week, or more	once a week	once or twice a month	three or four times a year	never
					(%)
men	18	24	20	23	15
women	20	26	19	24	11
total	19	25	20	23	13

Table 1:8 shows that women went to the cinema more often than men. The findings in two Government Social Surveys, one in wartime and one in 1946, were similar.<sup>33</sup> Class is more significant than gender in cinema-going, as Table 1:9 shows. A Mass-Observation national survey also found that cinema-going was more popular among those earning less than £10 a week.<sup>34</sup>

**Table 1:9 Frequency of cinema-going by class, 1947.<sup>35</sup>**

class	twice a week, or more	once a week	once or twice a month	three or four times a year	never
					(%)
upper	9	23	27	32	9
middle	14	27	24	26	9
lower	22	25	17	21	15

However, the most marked difference between various sample groups was revealed by the age analysis. Cinema-going was for the young.

Table 1:10 Frequency of cinema-going by age, 1947.<sup>36</sup>

age	twice a week, or more	once a week	once or twice a month	three or four times a year	never
					(%)
16-24	46	31	15	6	2
25-34	22	31	24	18	5
35-44	15	29	22	25	9
45 & over	10	19	18	31	22

In 1952, another market research survey estimated that on average, young persons between the ages of 15 and 24 frequented the cinema 62 times a year, which was nearly twice as much as those in any other age group.<sup>37</sup>

Table 1:11 Frequency of cinema-going by sex, 1959-1960.<sup>38</sup>

sex	regular	occasionally	infrequently	never
				(%)
men	14	11	26	49
women	12	10	27	52
all adults	13	10	26	51

The main change in the composition of cinema audiences between 1945 and 1960 was a fall off in the numbers of women, as the above table indicates. Women were more responsible for the drop in cinema attendances between the middle of the 1940s and 1960 than men.<sup>39</sup>

Cinemas mainly provided entertainment for the lower-class, and by the end of the 1950s, cinema had become more heavily patronised by the young persons than ever. In 1952, about 27 per cent of total cinema attendances was estimated to be made up of young persons between 16 and 24.<sup>40</sup> In

1960, a sample survey found that the figure had increased to 40.<sup>41</sup> Older people deserted the cinema most during this period.

Table 1:12 Frequency of cinema-going by social grades, 1959-1960.<sup>42</sup>

social classes	regular	occasionally	infrequently	never
				(%)
middle	7	12	39	42
lower middle	10	13	32	45
skilled working	14	10	26	50
working	16	7	19	58

Table 1:13 Frequency of cinema-going by age, 1959-1960.<sup>43</sup>

age	regular	occasionally	infrequently	never
				(%)
16-24	44	24	21	11
25-34	14	14	34	38
35-44	6	8	34	51
45-64	6	6	26	62
65 and over	5	3	15	78

Other elements, such as region and district, was also reflected in cinema-going habits. In 1950, people in Scotland and Northern parts of England patronised cinema most, about 37 times a year on average.<sup>44</sup> Remarkably, in the same year, people in Southern and Eastern England visited cinemas only about half the number of times that Northerners did. Ten years later, although people in the North were still the most frequent cinema-goers, the difference in frequency of cinema-going between regions had clearly narrowed.<sup>45</sup> Town people went to cinemas more

frequently than those in rural areas. However, even within each region or among neighbouring towns, there were often great differences in the cinema-going habit. These points will be developed in the case studies which follow.

There were many changes in the structure of both sides of the industry, both cinema exhibition and film production. One feature of the British cinema industry was its monopolistic tendency. During the mid-1930s, many small urban cinemas were taken over by large cinema circuits. By 1948, the three biggest circuits controlled 974 out of 4,600 cinemas in the United Kingdom.<sup>46</sup> In terms of the seating capacity, they controlled one-third of the total. The larger and more luxurious cinemas with a seating capacity of more than 1,500 were dominated by the Associated British Picture Corporation, the Odeon and the Gaumont-British companies whose share reached 70 per cent.<sup>47</sup> In terms of the gross box-office takings, they took more than two-thirds of the total.<sup>48</sup> In 1941, Odeon and Gaumont-British came under the single control of the J. Arthur Rank Organisation, though they remained operating separately until amalgamation in 1958.<sup>49</sup>

The decline of net box-office receipts of cinema exhibitors was shown in Table 1:7. According to the *Census*, in England and Wales, the number employed in cinemas declined from 64,585 in 1951 to 51,960 in 1961.<sup>50</sup> The number of commercial cinemas open in the country drastically dropped between 1945 and 1960, from 4,660 to 3,034.<sup>51</sup> Between 1950 and 1959, about 30 per cent of cinemas with less than 1,000 seating capacity closed down, while the

figures for those of between 1,000 and 1,500, and for those of more than 1,500, were 19 and 13, respectively.<sup>52</sup> The following Table 1:14 shows the changing distribution of cinema ownership between 1950 and 1960.

**Table 1:14 Changing distribution of cinema ownership, 1950-1960.<sup>53</sup>**

year	no. of circuits of with 10 or more cinemas	% of cinemas owned by circuits with 10 or more cinemas	% of cinemas controlled by 2 major circuits
1950	47	46.3	20.9
1960	33	57.7	25.7

In 1960, the two major circuits controlled 781 cinemas.<sup>54</sup> The power of major circuits was not confined to the cinema exhibiting trade. Two majors had their own distributing companies, production companies and production studios.

The production side of the British film industry experienced considerable difficulties in the post-war 1940s. The Labour Government tried to support the industry as we shall see in following chapter. In the 1950s, more American money became invested in British studios, partly because of the state subsidies available to them.<sup>55</sup>

The popularity of other commercial entertainments was far below that of cinemas. Between 1950 and 1952, as we have seen, 83 per cent of the total admissions for the taxable entertainments belonged to cinemas. The remaining 17 per cent were divided by the theatres, music halls and other entertainments (about 8 per cent) and by the various sports

and racing (about 9 per cent).<sup>56</sup> Although these are estimates based on taxable entertainments only, they show us a more or less precise picture of the distribution of popularity among the main entertainments. In the following sections, post-war developments in commercial entertainment other than cinemas will be examined.

### Theatre

The annual average number of admissions to theatres and music halls between 1950 and 1952 was estimated as 83 millions.<sup>57</sup> 1.6 millions enjoyed the show every week. The figure was far below that of cinema, which was more than 26.6 millions in 1950-51.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, unlike the cinema audience, there were hardly any attempts to count or survey theatre audiences. A Mass-Observation survey of 1948 and one in Derby in 1953 found that, middle-class people were more keen to visit the theatre than the working-class people.<sup>59</sup> According to the Derby survey, however, the majority of the audience remained working class, and in other respects, such as gender and age, similar characteristics were found in theatre-going habits as at the cinema-going. The survey also found that more than half of the respondents were patrons of both the theatre and the cinema. It is significant that, in Derby, the overall popularity of the theatre was above that of dancing: more than 20 per cent of the respondents visited the theatre more than once a month, while the corresponding figure for dancing was only 8; and the proportion of the non-theatre

public was 31 per cent, while that of the non-dancing public was 61.<sup>60</sup>

Most people preferred the lighter type of shows, rather than straight plays.<sup>61</sup> About three-quarters of government revenue from theatrical entertainments came from the variety and musical shows.<sup>62</sup> W. E. Williams, the Secretary-General of the Arts Council of Great Britain, estimated in 1953 that there were nearly 500 theatres in Great Britain.<sup>63</sup> 70 per cent of these premises specialised in popular bills, presenting entirely commercial 'revue, variety, farces and general fun and games'. The remaining 150 which were putting on 'straight plays', though never exclusively, fell into a further two categories: one-third were on the touring circuit, and the remaining two-thirds were repertory. About 50 theatres in touring circuits were controlled by the few major London companies, and took in the tours of West End successes, as well as the top level Variety shows.

It is difficult to assess how far the British theatre industry as a whole declined in the post-war period, for there were contradictory estimates. However, it is undeniable that it was not growing, nor profitable, as a whole. The number of theatre premises certainly dropped during the period. In 1936, there were nearly 60 theatres in London. Several closed down in the 1930s. During the war, another five were bombed, and by 1953 a further four were shut down. Less than 45 remained in 1958.<sup>64</sup> In the provinces, by 1954 up to 59 theatres had ceased to operate.<sup>65</sup> The middle years of the 1950s, the period immediately after the rate of entertainments tax on live

theatre had doubled,<sup>66</sup> was a particularly bad time for the theatre business. In 1956, the total number of the commercial theatres were estimated as about 350.<sup>67</sup> According to another survey, there were only 224 provincial theatres in 1960, of which 49 had been 'converted to a cinema and used only occasionally as a theatre, or closed'.<sup>68</sup>

However, the theatres which had survived in London were reportedly doing well in the early 1950s.<sup>69</sup> Contrary to the pre-war period, post-war theatres opened throughout the year irrespective of the season. Seat prices were little more than those of West End cinemas. Early starts also made them accessible to many office workers in London. The provincial theatres were less successful, especially the smaller ones. Those called 'Number One' theatres with a seating capacity of over 1,000 could engage star actors and actresses, and might keep their business in good shape. In 1960, there were two major theatre proprietors, Moss' Empires, and Howard and Wyndham, effectively owning or controlling 24 provincial 'Number One' theatres.<sup>70</sup> The number of independent 'Number One' theatres was only seven, one of which was in Coventry. As the 1950s went by, however, touring by successful West End productions was becoming a difficult enterprise even for these 'Number One' theatres. Star performers became reluctant to tour, tempted by increased job opportunities from other media, particularly television. While in October 1951 there were 110 tours to the provinces, in the same month four years later there were only 75.<sup>71</sup> Towards the end of the 1950s, theatre companies changed the tour



pattern, from a long tour after the end of a West End season to a short one before opening in London.<sup>72</sup>

The number of permanent provincial repertory companies, on the other hand, increased, from a dozen in 1939 to 44 in 1960, mostly subsidised by the Arts Council and local authorities.<sup>73</sup> Increased patronage from the public and the rates, as well as the rising enthusiasm of many local authorities in building civic theatres,<sup>74</sup> certainly helped to keep British repertory alive. By the end of the 1950s, the provincial repertory companies were fostering new writers, performers and producers of their own, and some of their productions were able to transfer to the West End. An Arts Council survey claimed that London managers and critics could no longer ignore what was going on in provincial repertory.<sup>75</sup> For all this, the financial management of the provincial repertory as a whole cannot be said to have been sound. In 1960 it was reported that only a quarter of them were surviving on their own income.<sup>76</sup>

The most marked decline in the theatrical world was, however, observed in the Variety show. Up to about 1948 to 1949, the wartime Variety boom continued.<sup>77</sup> However, by 1954, it was reported that many provincial music halls had closed down.<sup>78</sup> The changes in the booking system of the artists had not helped. Agents became more powerful than before the war, and one particular firm, the Grades monopolised the top artists.<sup>79</sup> Agents tended to kill the variety of the show, because they presented fewer artists and fewer acts, in order to take a bigger share from the limited profits.

By the late 1950s, many desperate smaller variety theatres had become dependent on the nude show.<sup>80</sup> The rest tried to find some new element in order to stop the decline. They employed popular musicians for the top of their bills more than ever, popular singers and musicians at first, and later skiffle and rock and roll stars. However, although the skiffle and rock stars packed the house when they played, this new format did not lead to a general revival of Variety. Moreover, disadvantage of the introduction of the rock musician was that it tended to divide the audience along the age line: Roger Wilmut described what happened in 1957 when Bill Haley toured the country topping Variety bills:

rock-and-roll was loud and subversive; adults found it raucous and felt threatened by it... teenagers ... sat in boredom through the usual supporting acts, and found that to their disgust Haley played only five numbers... The trouble was that although a theatre could be packed when playing a rock star, when it reverted to a more normal bill the following week it attracted neither the teenage fans nor the older audiences...<sup>81</sup>

A few small theatres in the North introduced 'Continental' type shows, which offered the audience light meals and drink while the show was going on. This conversion was in effect a return to the past of the music hall, but their success was very limited,<sup>82</sup> as we shall see in our case study of Bolton.

### Musical concerts

Musical concerts were always less popular than theatres or dancing. Even so, popular interest in serious music increased during and immediate after the war. According to a Gallup Poll in 1946-47 taken in the Greater London area, 70 per cent came to know classic music in war-time factory concerts. 31 per cent had more interest in concert-going than pre-war, as against 10 per cent whose interest had declined. Rather surprisingly, 24 per cent preferred symphony music, while only 14 per cent preferred dance music.<sup>83</sup> Although the decline of concert-goers was observed as early as 1947,<sup>84</sup> in 1949 it was still believed that the demand level was higher than pre-war.<sup>85</sup> The number of full-time symphony orchestras in the country also increased from two before the war to five during the war. However, the orchestras were struggling to survive. It was thought that in Britain orchestras giving less than five concerts a week could not be self-supporting.<sup>86</sup> Musicians employed by the Halle Orchestra worked 48 hours a week, including rehearsal and travel, in 1944-45.<sup>87</sup>

Who was the audience? According to a BBC audience survey in the early 1960s, the public for serious music was biased towards middle class and middle-aged people. Serious music, including military and brass bands, tended to be music for older ages, whereas light music, musicals and dance music were being enjoyed by people across the age ranges.<sup>88</sup> According to the Derby survey<sup>89</sup>, most concert-goers were occasional ones. But the music concert as a whole in Derby was more popular with middle class than with working-class people, though there was no class difference

found among the regulars who visited more than once a month. More men went regularly than women. And the concert-going as a whole was shored across the age range, being most popular among young persons, and least popular among 25-34 year olds, many of whom were presumably married with young children.

### Dancing

In 1953, an article in *The Economist*<sup>90</sup> suggested that the second most popular entertainment in terms of the total number of admissions was neither sport nor theatrical shows, but ballroom dancing. In the early 1950s, it was estimated that some 200 million people attended dance halls annually, against less than 100 million for football matches and theatrical shows.<sup>91</sup> As an industry, it was thought to have earned £25 million per year. The total number of halls was unknown, but they ranged from the bigger Palais de Danse type halls with two or three thousand capacity, usually in big cities and seaside resorts, to smaller halls adjacent to cinemas and restaurants. In addition to these sophisticated premises, about 500 town halls and public baths were being made use of as dance floors. Some large industrial firms had their own dance halls, often better equipped than their commercial counterparts. Every town had several dancing schools, often used for dancing at weekends, catering up to 100 dancers at a time. Two major national chains existed by 1953, but held only 16 and 12 halls respectively.

The dancing boom continued throughout the post-war period. Towards the end of the 1950s, many city cinemas were

converted to dance halls, as we will see later. Dancing classes were also well patronised. The biggest organisation of dancing instructors in the country claimed 2,500 fully qualified members in 1953. Competitive dancing was also increasingly popular. The number of professional championships totalled 65 by 1953.

*The Economist* claimed that the dancing public was mainly young persons, aged between 17 and 25, a conclusion shored by both the G. Gorer's study of 1950-51 and the Derby survey of 1953.<sup>92</sup> Among those who frequented the dance hall more than once a month, about one-third belonged to the 16 to 24 age group. Furthermore, 20 per cent of these young people went dancing every week. The overall public appeal of dancing was less than that of the theatre. The dancing public was limited to a small, but habitual group of young dancers. The British public went to dance for dancing's sake, while in both the United States and Europe dancing was an additional attraction to meals, drinks and shows.<sup>93</sup>

### Sport

Within the field of spectacular sport and racing, football was the most popular spectator sport. Total attendances exceeded the aggregate of those of all the remaining sports. For example, between 1950 and 1952, on average, it was estimated that more than 80 million taxable admissions were made to football matches. This was no larger than those of the theatres and music halls, but much greater than cricket, greyhound racing and horse racing with 5, 27, and 6 million, respectively.<sup>94</sup>

Among various forms of football, association football was by far the most popular. In the early 1950s, nearly a million people a week during the season paid to watch the game in the English League.<sup>95</sup> The number of attendances declined from season 1948-49 with 41.3 million to over 32 million in 1959-60.<sup>96</sup> The Football Association Cup final regularly drew more than 100,000, and was more popular than international matches. The football crowd was largely male. In 1950, while about half the population of men were attending the match, only one-tenth of women had the same experience.<sup>97</sup>

There were 92 League clubs in 1951 with four divisions. Among more than 70 other leagues and competitions run under the Football Association, about 20 English clubs had at least one professional player. In total, 416 clubs had some semi-professionals on the staff.<sup>98</sup> However, football was not a commercial business in the usual sense. Under the rules of the Football Association, no directors were allowed to receive any payment. The majority of professional clubs never paid any dividend to their share holders.<sup>99</sup> And even the high attendances during the immediate post-war period did not ease the financial difficulties, which prevailed especially among the lower League clubs. Prosperous clubs were a minority, and a survey published in 1951 concluded that there was 'an unbridgeable gap' between the top clubs in the First Division and the bottom clubs in Division III.<sup>100</sup> The gap seemed to have widened by the end of the 1950s. Both the decline in attendances and ever increasing expenditure hit most severely the less prosperous smaller

clubs. Anthony Giddens found that only one club in the lower ranks of the League made a working profit at the end of the 1950s.<sup>101</sup> Although the total number of supporters' clubs hardly increased during the 1950s (about 350 strong),<sup>102</sup> their fund raising for the smaller clubs became essential to their survival.<sup>103</sup> Despite these continuing financial difficulties, commercial sponsorship did not amount to much in football, compared with later periods. The Football League before 1960 was also under the regulation of the maximum wage. In 1960, even First Division players earned no more than one and a half times as much as skilled workers averaged.<sup>104</sup> One historian characterised British football in the decade like this: *'In the 1950s football was thought to embody the limited but essentially decent side of traditional, masculine, working-class culture'*.<sup>105</sup>

Rugby League football was a sport virtually limited to the people of the North of England, in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumberland. It was a minority sport, as reflected in the amount of entertainment tax paid: in the early 1950s only 7 per cent of that paid by association football.<sup>106</sup> In 1956, there were 30 professional and 305 amateur Rugby League clubs.<sup>107</sup> Attendances at the professional leagues declined in the 1950s, and many smaller clubs were struggling to make ends meet.<sup>108</sup> Rugby Union was another minority sport. Unlike Rugby League, it was entirely composed of amateur players. In the early 1950s, although Rugby Union claimed 1,400 affiliated clubs,<sup>109</sup> it only paid 2 per cent of the total paid in entertainments tax.<sup>110</sup> Admission fees were very small, and were mostly exempted from the tax.<sup>111</sup> In

fact almost all Rugby Union revenue came from just two international matches a year.<sup>112</sup>

The second popular spectator sport was cricket, though it attracted considerably less of the public than greyhound racing. Cricket followed a similar pattern of decline in the post-war period. In 1947 the total number of paid spectators at all levels was estimated at over eight millions.<sup>113</sup> The following Table 1:15 shows the annual attendances at County Championship matches:

**Table 1:15 Attendances at Cricket County Championship matches, 1948-1960.<sup>114</sup>**

year	attendance
1948	1,890,000
49	2,126,000
50	1,979,000
51	1,808,000
52	1,943,000
53	1,646,000
54	1,408,000
55	1,641,000
56	1,174,079
57	1,197,979
58	983,820
59	1,369,673
60	1,046,104

Although 1958 was a wet summer and 1959 had exceptionally fine weather during the season, the general decline in county cricket after the post-war boom was clear.

In addition to the county clubs, there were many clubs competing in league cricket in the North and Midlands. The attendances at league matches varied, from 'a few hundred up to several thousand',<sup>115</sup> at the end of the 1950s. Each league club usually employed at least one professional,



which was wholly different from those clubs in the South that consisted exclusively of amateurs, and that played no competitive matches for the purpose of entertaining spectators.

In the middle of the 1950s, there were between 500 and 800 professional players at county clubs.<sup>116</sup> Probably this decline was due to the decline of smaller clubs in the leagues, as we will see later in the case study of Bolton. One thing which was certain was that the amateurs were disappearing from the county clubs. Top professional cricket players could earn more than £10,000 a year in the post-war 1940s,<sup>117</sup> while the average county player took no more than £800 at the end of the 1950s.<sup>118</sup> Although the financial situation varied from club to club, many only survived due to a share of money earned from Test matches, and with incomes from their supporters' associations which were running football pools, dances and whist drives throughout the 1950s.<sup>119</sup>

### Racing and gambling

Throughout the post-war period, greyhound racing attracted the second largest attendances among the spectator sports, following association football. Estimated annual attendances reached a peak of 45 millions in 1946 (or 39 millions in the 1946-47 financial year),<sup>120</sup> when racing was back to normal. Speedway racing also became popular in post-war urban Britain. It attracted 12.5 million spectators in 1949, compared with about 6.5 million just after the war.<sup>121</sup> Greyhound racing, however, was mainly patronised by a small

habitual minority. The Government Social Survey on betting habits and spending in 1950 estimated that 1.2 million people were making up about 30 million total annual attendance in that year, whereas in the case of horse racing, 2.5 millions were responsible for about 10 to 15 millions in total.<sup>122</sup> According to market research conducted in 1948, among the total adult population aged 16 years and over, only 1.5 per cent attended greyhound tracks regularly and 95.1 per cent replied that they never went.<sup>123</sup> Among the total adult dog race-goers, women were a quarter. It was certainly a working-class past-time, with no less than 77 per cent of the race-goers belonging to the working classes. Research also found that the age range of the patrons virtually confined to those between 25 and 65.

As an industry, it consisted of 209 race-courses in Britain in 1948, of which 132 were small scale mostly with less than 1,000 attendances per meeting.<sup>124</sup> Many of them were 'one-man businesses', running the race for private owner-trainers such as miners, while the dogs on the larger race-courses were owned by the proprietor of the course. After a nearly 30 per cent drop in attendances from 45 millions to 32 millions between 1946 to 1947, the estimated level of annual attendances remained almost the same at least in the 1940s.<sup>125</sup> A drop in the numbers watching the speedway was also observed by the middle of the 1950s: the 3.5 millions in 1956 was less than one-third of the record of 1949.<sup>126</sup>

On-course betting at greyhound tracks was the indispensable attraction. Although based on a small sample,

the Social Survey estimated that 70 to 80 per cent of the total race-goers placed a bet.<sup>127</sup> This percentage was higher than those estimated for horse racing (about 50 per cent) and association football (59 per cent).<sup>128</sup> The Table 1:16 shows the comparative trends in the total amount staked on totalisators and pools at the three most popular gambling sports in Britain. Although these figures excluded the amounts bet through bookmakers, legal or not, which was by far the most popular form of betting in the case of horse-racing, the Table is still useful in reflecting the broader trends of the period.

**Table 1:16 Total estimated annual amounts staked on totalisators and pools, 1938-1950.**<sup>129</sup>

year	horse racing	dog racing	football pools
			(£ million)
1938	9	32	23
1946	13	199	17
47	21.1	131.5	53
48	26.3	99.6	64
49	25.9	85.6	58
50	25.5	70	52

The immediate post-war boom was commonly observed among the three industries. It was pointed out that because of a lack of consumer goods, people had more spare money for betting.<sup>130</sup> The removal of various wartime restrictions on the provision of betting was another element. However, the decline in the amount of stakes at greyhound racing was outstanding. There have been no conclusive reasons suggested so far for this decline, but after the immediate post-war boom enjoyed under the normal racing arrangements, two major

set-backs occurred to the industry: the Government ban on mid-week racing inaugurated in early 1947 was not removed until July 1949; and pool betting duty on greyhound totalisators was imposed from January 1948 at the rate of 10 per cent, which, the promoters believed, would convert many of the betting public from totalisators to bookmakers. While it seems that the greyhound racing industry had more severe burdens than elsewhere, the football pool industry too, was paying extra taxes: pool betting duty was imposed on football pools, at the higher rate of 30 per cent from April 1949. Moreover, the bookmakers' duty was also imposed from August 1948 on those operating on course.

London had a strong presence as far as the amount of betting on the dogs was concerned. In the post-war 1940s, about half of the totalisator stakes were made on 21 London tracks. After 1954 and up to 1960, there was no appreciable change in the amounts of the stake on greyhound racing. The figures remained more or less about £60 millions.<sup>131</sup> The total amount staked on football pools began to climb in the 1950s, though it was stagnating between 1954 and 1957. In 1960, the sum had grown to over £100 millions, about twice as much as the amount staked in 1950.<sup>132</sup>

The 1950 Social Survey on betting found that more than three-quarters of the adult population were participating in some form. Of those who did not bet, many had probably experienced betting in the past. The Survey noted that betting was 'an almost universal habit'.<sup>133</sup> Although the most widely participated gamble was on horse racing, on which 44 per cent of adults bet, about a third, most of them

were women, did not consider their very occasional flutter as betting.<sup>134</sup> They placed small amounts on a classic race such as the Derby, on which in 1949 about half of the total male population and one-third of the female placed a bet.

Taking into account the above characteristic of horse-race betting, therefore, the most popular gambling in Britain must have been football pools. A Mass-Observation survey shows that 44 per cent of all adults aged over 16 were filling in the football coupons in 1947.<sup>135</sup> The corresponding figure in the Social Survey sample in 1950 was 39.<sup>136</sup> Market research in 1949 claimed 33.1.<sup>137</sup> Both surveys confirmed that men outnumbered women by 2:1. Football pool betting was certainly 'a poor man's hobby'.<sup>138</sup> More than three-quarters of all the participants belonged to the working classes.<sup>139</sup> But according to the Social Survey, only about 70 per cent of the participants sent coupons under their own names, which means that coupons were often shared among families, relatives, friends and work mates.<sup>140</sup> The average amount of the weekly stake was between 2s. 6d. and 3s. 2d.,<sup>141</sup> which was smaller than that spent on other forms of gambling.<sup>142</sup> On average, men spent on the pools nearly twice as much as women did.<sup>143</sup> Overall, women participated less in all types of gambling and betted smaller amounts than men. However, there was one field of 'gambling' that women dominated: that was raffles.<sup>144</sup>

By 1953, 90 per cent of the total turnover in football pools was cornered by six major promoters.<sup>145</sup> By the end of that year, the number of pool firms decreased to 35, from 42 in 1950.<sup>146</sup> Among them, two majors, Littlewoods and

Vernons, were extremely powerful, controlling 80 per cent of the total market in 1959.<sup>147</sup> Interestingly, at the end of the 1940s, it was found that no less than three-quarters of the 23,500 total work-force engaged in the industry lived in Liverpool and were mostly women.<sup>148</sup> The betting industry as a whole increased its work-force, from 32,138 in 1951 to 41,810 in 1961.<sup>149</sup>

### Drinking habits: beer

The British brewing industry as a whole had been in long-term decline since the beginning of the twentieth century. People's spending on beer increased during wartime, but from 1946 to 1960 it steadily declined. Beer output had continued to fall until 1950,<sup>150</sup> when a reduction in duty was made. During the 1950s, the production remained stable, at a level similar to that in the late 1930s. In 1959 the reduction in beer duty resulted in a cut in price by 2d. per pint, and it was in the 1960s that output started to increase again. The brewing industry noted that this general reduction delivered 'a heartening recovery in public demand'.<sup>151</sup>

One of the marked features in the brewing industry was its vertical penetration of ownership. By 1950, about 95 per cent of public houses and some 40 per cent of off-licences in England and Wales were tied.<sup>152</sup> The top 33 brewing companies (9.7 per cent of the total number of breweries), which owned more than 500 public houses each, controlled no less than 38 per cent of the total number of public houses in the country.<sup>153</sup> Although considerable local ownership of tied-houses still existed in 1960, small scale brewers were

increasingly in difficulties in achieving economies to compete with larger rivals.<sup>154</sup> But it was an accepted view that the tendency towards concentration strengthened primarily because of the British licensing laws.<sup>155</sup> It restricted the number of retail outlets, so that brewers tended to increase the volume of sales by taking over, or by merging with, their competitors.

There were noticeable changes in people's drinking habits. According to market research conducted in 1947, 37 per cent of men were 'regular' beer drinkers, by which it meant those persons who drank more than once a week, against only 7 per cent of women.<sup>156</sup> 'Occasional' beer drinkers, who drank once a week or less, were 38 per cent among men and 29 per cent among women. Thus considerably fewer women drank beer than men. There were no appreciable class differences in drinking habits. By the middle of the 1950s, men and women who drank 'regularly' declined to less than 28 and 5 per cent, respectively.<sup>157</sup> Occasional drinkers increased to 47 per cent among men, while the corresponding percentage among women returned from 32 in 1949 to 30, almost the same as in 1947. It is undeniable that both men and women drank beer less frequently in the early 1950s than in the immediate post-war years.

By the time the Labour Government was out of office, some trends in the drinking trade were well established. Firstly, people's preference in beer drinking changed. The demand for bottled beer, often advertised nationally, increased so that by 1951 it accounted for one-third of the total production of beer.<sup>158</sup> In 1958, it was estimated

about 40 per cent of the market was the share of bottled and canned beer,<sup>159</sup> though considerable regional bias existed.<sup>160</sup> The big companies also started to produce their own brand of lager, a light coloured and filtered beer, towards the end of the 1950s, against the increased popularity of the imported ones among the younger generation.<sup>161</sup> Secondly, people's proportionate spending on other types of drink, especially wines and soft drinks, increased, while that on beers did not,<sup>162</sup> although the relationship between beer and other drinks was not totally competitive. Thirdly, public houses were fighting a losing battle against ever expanding clubs, restaurants, canteens and off-licensed stores in attracting the drinking public.<sup>163</sup> The number of licensed clubs and off-licensed premises increased by 44 and 9 per cent, respectively, between 1946 and 1960, while those of the public houses reduced by 5 per cent.<sup>164</sup> All these phenomena encouraged brewers to modernise and rationalise their public houses. At the same time brewing companies expanded their field of business by buying up resort hotels,<sup>165</sup> by bottling and distributing soft drinks, and by spending more money on advertising. The tied system became increasingly out of date, and reciprocal agreements allowing the sales of rival beers at the hitherto exclusive tied houses spread.<sup>166</sup> Joint establishment of new pubs was also tried.

Overall, beer sales declined to the level of prewar. Nevertheless, in 1960 about half of all men aged 16 and over replied that they drank beer at least once a week.<sup>167</sup> The corresponding figure for women was about 13 per cent. The



brewing industry as a whole was not an expanding industry, but except in 1950 and 1951 the larger companies continued to make a comfortable profit.<sup>168</sup>

### 3. Clubs, Societies and Associations

It is difficult to talk about the national trend of voluntary recreational organisations, which were numerous in numbers, wide ranging in character and scale, and highly localised in activity. The significance of these organisations would not be understood if they were taken out of the local and neighbourhood environments. Detailed local pictures will be described in the case studies in later chapters. Here, only a few major aspects of post-war voluntary recreational organisations will be traced.

One of the fastest growing voluntary organisations catering for working-class people's leisure in the post-war Britain was the working man's club. Most working men's social clubs affiliated to a national organisation, The Working Men's Club and Institute Union. The main function of the clubs was to supply beer to its members at cheaper prices in a more comfortable and relaxed environment than the public house. Unlike the pub, the opening hours of club bars were more flexible. There was no pressure to buy drinks if the member did not want, and many clubs provided good leisure facilities for entertainments, reading, games and sports. Various socials and outings were organised not only for members but also their families. The raising and donating of a substantial amount of money to charity was another aim.<sup>169</sup> In addition, the Union and its member clubs

had retained an educational dimension. In 1954, no less than a quarter of the total member clubs had their own libraries.<sup>170</sup> The Union offered a distant learners' course for the club management diploma, one day and seasonal residential schools, and scholarships for its members to study at Ruskin College.<sup>171</sup> Although these were minority activities, nearly a quarter of the total number of clubs organised lectures and classes,<sup>172</sup> often in association with the Workers' Educational Association.<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, the Union had five convalescent homes by the beginning of the 1950s, paid for by a massive voluntary contribution from its members.<sup>174</sup>

But it is clear that entertainments, games and sports were more popular and played more significant roles in club life than anything else. As the war approached its end, various national games and sports, such as the billiards tournament and angling championship, quickly resumed.<sup>175</sup> By the end of 1950, the number of trophies the Union distributed reached 1,200, competed for in over 30 kinds of games, hobbies and sports, from darts, the most popular, to horticulture and live stock shows.<sup>176</sup> The large clubs and these which served as local headquarters had luxurious concert halls. In the 1950s, Variety artists increasingly performed there, because many commercial theatres had closed.<sup>177</sup> Some of the comedians had a hard time to get a laugh at the clubs, where entertainments often had secondary importance to drink, food and companionship.<sup>178</sup> Although there is no doubt that the most of the administrative business of the Union and the member clubs were run in a

democratic way, and any misconduct of officers or members severely punished, the general secretary of the Variety Artists' Federation (VAF), Reg Swinson, observed a darker aspect of club administration:

The VAF had only marginal success - later on Equity [another performers' trade union] had greater success - with these working men's clubs; I came across a greater omnipotence than capitalist employers could ever have arranged. They slammed the door in my face, and told me to push off - and other things. I found it a remarkable contradiction that, whereas ostensibly these clubs were linked with the Labour and Trade Unions movement, in practice they were very reluctant to allow artists an agreed contract.<sup>179</sup>

In 1954, nearly 89 per cent of the member clubs were providing entertainments.<sup>180</sup>

The growth of the club movement continued in the post-war years. In 1945, 2,979 clubs had one and a half million members affiliated to the Union.<sup>181</sup> In 1951, the number of the member clubs increased to 3,264.<sup>182</sup> In 1957, it further increased to 3,425 with 2,012,055 members.<sup>183</sup> This meant that no less than 13 per cent of the total registered clubs belonged to the Union.<sup>184</sup> By the middle of the 1950s, a sign appeared showing the character of the working men's clubs was changing. A suggestion from the Union Executive proposed to change the name from the 'Working Men's Club and Institute Union' to the 'National Club and Institute Union'. It was explained that 'Working Men's' was out of date for two reasons.<sup>185</sup> Firstly, more than one-third of the member clubs now admitted women, who accounted nearly 10 per cent of the total membership. Branches like West Midland, Warwickshire, South Yorkshire and Manchester and District

had a high percentage of women members: one woman to six or seven men. In South Wales and Northumberland, the ratio was the lowest, one woman to 120 and 162 men, respectively.<sup>186</sup> Issue of 'Associate and Pass Cards' to women members, which was hitherto not allowed, had also been demanded. Secondly, it was said that 'Working Men's' implied that the Union kept 'a class consciousness' which the Union was 'trying to eradicate'.<sup>187</sup> However, this proposal was only to re-confirm that working men's clubs were run by working men for working men. At the following Council meeting held in Leicester, which 1,008 delegates attended, the proposal was lost with only four supporting votes.<sup>188</sup>

The Union campaigned and fought hard against any attempt by Government, police, local magistrates and brewers to restrict their autonomy.<sup>189</sup> In 1962, the movement celebrated its centenary, with 3,500 clubs, 2,250,000 members and total assets of £31,000,000.<sup>190</sup> The unprecedented popularity of the club movement continued in the 1960s. There were other clubs whose main function was drinking and social. Although they were classified as a political club, the Conservative Clubs were a case in point. Some 1,500 of these clubs affiliated to the Association of Conservative Clubs in the mid-1950s.<sup>191</sup> However, unlike the working men's clubs, the number of affiliated clubs did not increase.<sup>192</sup> In the 1950s, another new social club movement emerged. By 1961, some 7,000 social clubs for elderly persons existed.<sup>193</sup>

Social clubs were the most popular type of organisation in which working-class men were the dominant social group. A sample survey conducted in Derby in 1953 found nearly 80 per cent of the total membership of social clubs consisted of working-class people.<sup>194</sup> The next popular type of club or association were those for sport and recreation. Although middle-class membership increased to 43 per cent on average, still the majority of members in these organisations were working-class.

As we have shown, the major spectator sports declined in terms of attendances after the short booms in the immediate post-war years. But recreational participatory sports did not seem to have similar experiences. In 1951, an article in *The Economist* questioned the reputation that Britain was a sporting nation, estimating that: 'for every one who ever plays a game there are two content to sit and watch, while another twenty go to the cinema'.<sup>195</sup> This was confirmed by the 1953 sample survey in Derby.<sup>196</sup> In that survey, on average, only 11 per cent of the adult sample aged 16 and over played in winter and 21 per cent in summer, though the gender difference was considerable: the percentage of participation in sports was 31 among men, against only 15 among women. Middle-class people and skilled workers participated in sport to almost the same degree, which was twice as high as the lower classes. The most popular participatory sport among working-class men was football, with cricket, swimming and tennis largely middle class. Another characteristic of the sport participants was

not surprising: the proportional participation in each age dropped sharply in after the age of 35.<sup>197</sup>

A Gallup Poll taken in 1960 showed that on two particular Saturday afternoons in summer, 7 to 8 per cent of the sample replied that they 'played sport or physical recreation' against 5 per cent 'watched sport' and 16-18 per cent 'watched T.V. afternoon sports'.<sup>198</sup> This participatory percentage is considerably lower than those found in the Derby survey, but they are too different to compare. The Wolfenden Committee report on sport published in 1960 indicated the general trends of participatory sporting activities in Britain was upward:

Our evidence leads us to the conclusion, for instance, that there are in fact more people - and, especially, more young people - now participating in physical recreation of one kind or another than ever before. Of 43 separate physical activities for which we have been given comparative pre-war and post-war statistics a decline is reported in only 6, whereas there is a marked increase in 31, in 20 of which the increase is really substantial.<sup>199</sup>

The Wolfenden report did not mention which sports declined, but it was often assumed that team games lost ground to more individualistic sports such as tennis, golf, fishing and sailing. Josselyn Hennessy claimed this, citing estimates from the *News Chronicle*. Excluding schools and services, in the 1949-50 season, there were 470,000 players in 30,000 association football clubs, while the figures fell to 435,000 in 29,000 clubs in 1959-60.<sup>200</sup> However, according to the FA, the total number of affiliated clubs in 1957 was 31,000, with 125,000 teams. The distribution of their member

players were 7,018 professionals, 750,000 amateurs and 85,000 juniors.<sup>201</sup> In addition, many street football teams organised informal matches regularly, and often played on Sunday.<sup>202</sup> Sunday football was expanding in the post-war period, and it was finally recognised by the FA in 1960, when some 3,000 clubs became organised into 70 leagues.<sup>203</sup> Overall, it seemed that the popularity of association football as a participatory sport did not suffer much in the post-war.<sup>204</sup>

The volume of participants in other organised outdoor sports was smaller than those in association football. In the early 1950s, Rugby Union had 1,400 member clubs.<sup>205</sup> In the middle of the 1950s, Rugby League had only 305 amateur clubs, looking after some 20,000 players.<sup>206</sup> Bowling commanded more popular support: in 1960, in England only, there were at least 2,450 clubs.<sup>207</sup> Among the more individualistic sports, angling was one of the most popular among the working classes. In 1950, the National Federation of Anglers claimed a membership of 300,000 over 80 regional branches, mostly consisting of weekly wage earners.<sup>208</sup> In Sheffield and Birmingham, the number of organised anglers in the early 1950s rose to between 25,000 and 30,000.<sup>209</sup> The Anglers Co-operative Association was another large scale national organisation. *The Midland Angler* estimated in 1954 that the total angling population in Britain would be half a million on the basis of the number of fishing licences issued by river authorities.<sup>210</sup> When we calculated the total number of the angling public in 1960 in this way, the estimated figure was one million.<sup>211</sup> Although the claim

that two million anglers existed in 1960<sup>212</sup> must have been an exaggeration, the sport was flourishing in the 1950s. Other amateur water sports, especially competitive ones, also gained popularity. A quarter of a million people were interested in amateur racing and boating.<sup>213</sup> Although participation in water sports were largely limited to the social classes above skilled workers, the membership of both the British Canoe Union and the Royal Yachting Association increased from just a thousand each in 1950 to 4,000 and 11,000 in 1960 respectively.<sup>214</sup>

Golf also became a less class-biased sport by 1960, when there were 1,200 clubs in England and Wales, and 500 clubs in Scotland. About 1,500 of these formed a Golf Clubs Protection Association.<sup>215</sup> They supplied alcoholic drinks, and in many ways played similar roles to social clubs. Although their total membership was about a quarter of a million, which was only a slight increase from pre-war, *The Economist* article guessed that the number of occasional golfers was probably another million.<sup>216</sup> There was also minority sports such as Judo which established itself in the post-war period. The national governing body, the British Judo Association, was founded in 1948 with only 10 member clubs, but by the early 1960s, more than 400 clubs affiliated all over the country.<sup>217</sup> An individual membership scheme started in 1961 was successful one, attracting more than 10,000 registered players. The total judo population in the country was estimated about 20,000, whose approximate distribution was 80 per cent adult men, 5 per cent adult women, and 15 per cent juniors.<sup>218</sup>



But some others, such as cycling clubs and non-commercial holiday associations which had a middle-class bias in origin but enjoyed the increased membership during the inter-war period,<sup>219</sup> had to struggle in the 1950s. The total membership of the Cyclists' Touring Club reached a peak in 1950 with 53,574.<sup>220</sup> The editorial of the club journal explained the rapid decline like this: 'The ease with which motor vehicles can now be obtained, and the attraction of pursuits less "arduous" than cycling, are as much - if not greater - a reason for the decline as any hardship that may be caused by the present subscription rates'.<sup>221</sup> The following Table 1:17 shows the membership of other outdoor recreational organisations.

**Table 1:17 Membership of organisations for outdoor activities, 1950 and 1960.**<sup>222</sup>

organisation	1950	1960
		(thousand)
Camping Club (incl Ireland)	14	52
Caravan Club	11	44
Youth Hostel Association	247	219
Holiday Fellowship	38	49 [1957]
Ramblers' Association	9	11
British Cycling Federation	67	21
Cycling Tourist Club	54	26

The British Workers' Sports Association and the Workers' Travel Association experienced the worst decline, winding themselves up in the late 1950s.<sup>223</sup> On the other hand, Table 1:17 shows that the popularity of rambling, camping and caravanning increased. These, especially the latter two,

were beneficiaries from increased motoring as well as rising spending power.

Clubs other than social, sport and recreational types attracted considerably fewer working-class people. In early 1950s Derby, it was found that, on average, the majority of members of cultural club (59 per cent) were middle class.<sup>224</sup> While social, sport and recreational clubs were dominated by men, cultural clubs had nearly equal membership between men and women. In music, dramatic and church organisations, women's membership tended to exceed that of men.<sup>225</sup> The three most popular organisations among Derby women were the social clubs, the women's organisations and the church organisations, though each participation rate was no more than 7 per cent of all adult women aged over 16. Women's organisations attracted a large number of women, and were being run by women for women. One of the three largest women's organisations was the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds. In 1947, the Union claimed only 12,000 total membership in 800 guilds.<sup>226</sup> However, it increased the membership considerably by 1961 when there were about a quarter of million members in some 2,200 Guilds.<sup>227</sup> Another larger women's organisation was the National Federation of Women's Institutes, whose main official aim was to improve rural life. When the war was over, there were 6,500 branches with 350,000 members.<sup>228</sup> In the first half of the 1950s, it had over 7,500 branches with nearly half a million members.<sup>229</sup> But by 1961, although the numbers of branches increased by a thousand, the total membership had fallen to

450,000.<sup>230</sup> In the post-war years, its social composition was fairly and increasingly mixed.<sup>231</sup> The third and the largest women's voluntary organisation was the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS). The WVS was a quasi-public social service agency, but most of the work was done by volunteers. It had 900,000 enrolled membership immediately after the war. Its majority members were over 40 in the first half of the 1950s, and working-class participation was no more than 30 per cent.<sup>232</sup>

Talking about leisure activities in associational forms, two more distinct type of organisations should be mentioned: works' clubs and youth clubs. Details will be examined in later chapters. Here, only general trends are mentioned. At many large firms, wide ranging social, sport, recreational and cultural facilities were well established by the 1930s. The most common and basic provision was social clubs where the employees and their friends and families could drink, chat and relax. But the larger factories often provided luxurious sports pitches and dance halls. Although many companies made a contribution to the costs of the capital expenditure, employees often automatically became club members, and small weekly subscriptions were deducted from their wages.<sup>233</sup> Participation of employees in club activity varied considerably. According to the survey done by the Industrial Welfare Society in the mid-1950s, less than 20 per cent participation was the majority experience.<sup>234</sup> The survey also indicated that the firms in Midlands had a higher participation rate and a far wider range of activity. In many industrial towns, like Hull,

Sheffield, Norwich and Coventry, works sports associations were formed, which organised various leagues and competitions.<sup>235</sup>

Gorer's study found in 1951 that nearly a quarter of the young under 18 and one-eighth of the 18-24's belonged to a youth club.<sup>236</sup> In 1960, there were more than 40 major national voluntary organisations servicing young persons aged under 21. Some were pre-service or religious organisations, and the others, such as National Association of Boys' Clubs and the National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs, were more secularised. Total membership reached about three millions.<sup>237</sup> The fortunes of particular youth organisations varied. Some lost members, but most increased or at least sustained membership strength.<sup>238</sup>

#### 4. Home-Based Leisure

Housing conditions, both private and local authority built, improved in the post-war period. Houses became more comfortable, and kitchens and bathrooms were better fitted and equipped.<sup>239</sup> Public expenditure on furniture and flooring coverings more than doubled between 1946 and 1960 in real terms.<sup>240</sup> More refrigerators, washing machines and vacuum cleaners, were bought. Working-class people's positive attachment to the home was also evident in the growth of home-ownership. In the late 1940s, about one in five working-class families owned their own houses.<sup>241</sup> Ten years later, according to the *Census* of 1961, the average percentage of home-ownership among skilled manual workers' households was 36 per cent; semi-skilled, 30 per cent; and

unskilled, 22 per cent.<sup>242</sup> However, the increase in the comfort of people's houses in Britain during the fifties should not be too exaggerated. In 1961, more than 20 per cent of dwellings in England and Wales lacked a hot water tap.<sup>243</sup> The almost same proportion had no fixed bath. Among private households, nearly 18 per cent lacked both.<sup>244</sup>

Nevertheless, the importance of home was undeniable throughout the forties and fifties. According to a wartime social survey conducted by the Government in 1943, 52 per cent said that 'their main spare-time interests were connected with the home' while only 20 per cent said that 'their main interests were outside the home'.<sup>245</sup> A national urban areas survey conducted in March 1947 found 55 per cent of adult men and 75 per cent of adult women at home after 5 p.m. in the evening prior to the interview.<sup>246</sup> A BBC national survey conducted in April 1961 presented a very similar picture.<sup>247</sup> On average, no less than 60 per cent of the total sample aged over 15 were at home after 6 p.m. in any evening, although the gender difference was considerably smaller than found in the 1947 survey. This overall picture was true for both the middle-class and the working-class. The sole exception was the age group between 15 and 24 years old: on Saturdays, the majority was out between 7 and 10 p.m., though on most weekday and Sunday evenings the majority were at home.

The BBC survey further revealed that on Saturday mornings more than 40 per cent of men were at work, while a similar proportion of women engaged in household duties.<sup>248</sup> But in total, at nearly any time on Saturdays, more than 40

per cent of the sample stayed at home.<sup>249</sup> Sunday was even more clearly a day for staying at home. No less than 60 per cent were always at home, irrespective of class and gender differences, although the age group of 15 to 24 years old was again exceptional.<sup>250</sup> Both surveys confirmed that the significant differences as to the length of time spent at home were those of age and gender: women tended to stay at home longer than men, and the young tended to be out much longer than older persons.

### Gardening

One of the most popular pastimes at home among men was gardening. The findings by various post-war surveys conducted between the late 1940s and the early 1960s showed that no less than two-thirds of British homes had a garden of one kind or another,<sup>251</sup> although there were class and regional differences. Nearly 40 per cent of households in the lowest income group had no gardens nor allotments in the late 1940s.<sup>252</sup> Regional differences were sharper. In the early 1960s, it was estimated that the proportion of the households with gardens was about 30 per cent less in the North West than the national average.<sup>253</sup>

According to the market research of the late 1940s and early 1950s, about 40 per cent of men and 20 per cent of women were spare-time gardeners, either 'regular' or 'occasional'.<sup>254</sup> In 1958, a Gallup Poll showed that 19 million adults (52 per cent of the total adult population) had gardened in the past month, though the figure included 7.5 million occasional gardeners.<sup>255</sup> There were class

differences. In 1956, while only 29 per cent of working-class households owned lawn mowers, the figure for middle-class households was 65.<sup>256</sup> But gender bias was also evident: while men in different classes more or less equally engaged in gardening, working-class women gardeners were far fewer than those in the higher classes.<sup>257</sup> It further suggested in 1950 that the gardening was a hobby for family men aged between 35 and 64. The different degree of provision of the garden between north and south seemed something to do with the fact that Southerners were more likely to be gardeners than Northerners.<sup>258</sup> One further aspect should be noted: many people did not see gardening as leisure. In 1953 Derby, for example, only 16 per cent of men and 5 per cent of women replied that they did gardening as a hobby, though it was the most popular hobby listed by the men.<sup>259</sup> As Pimlott argued, for some gardening was a pleasure, but for many others it was just 'a non-work obligation'.<sup>260</sup>

### Home-decorating, or do-it-yourself

Another popular leisure activity at home which had a strong element of obligation was 'house (or home) decorating', or 'do it yourself'. The phrase became fashionable in the second half of the 1950s.<sup>261</sup> By the middle of the 1950s, related subjects were regularly featured on television, in newspapers and books.<sup>262</sup> By the end of the 1950s, it was estimated that just over half of all adults aged 16 and over in Britain practised 'do-it-yourself' during the last 12 months: among men, the proportion was nearly 60 per cent,

and among women the figure was 46.<sup>263</sup> Ferdynand Zweig's enquiry in the same period into the pastime of male workers' at four industrial firms showed that between 30 and 40 per cent of them did 'do-it-yourself' in the last four weeks.<sup>264</sup> The popularity of the activity was confirmed by people's reading habits of monthly magazines. In 1960, home-related magazines such as *Do it yourself*, *Practical Householder*, *Ideal Home*, *Homemaker*, *Homes and Gardens* were among monthly periodicals which had the largest circulations. *Do It Yourself* was launched in the second half of the 1950s. It rapidly gained popularity, and by 1960, it had the second largest circulation of monthlies (more than 2,200,000) only after the *Readers' Digest*, and was read by 12 per cent of adult men and 7 per cent of adult women.<sup>265</sup> A readership survey showed that there were different levels of interest in these magazines between men and women, with 'do-it-yourself' activity more popular among men than women. Indirect evidence for the immediate post-war period suggested that 'home decorating' was already a popular activity. In 1948, among working class households whose income was no more than £5 a week, the average expenditure on 'decorating interior' was more than three times that on 'repairs to interior'.<sup>266</sup>

There is also some indirect evidence which suggests that 'do-it-yourself' had a positive correlation with the home ownership. In 1953-54, average expenditure on home repairs, maintenance and decorations among owner occupiers was more than four times as much as that among households renting local authority dwellings,<sup>267</sup> though this does not



mean that there was no enthusiasm for home decorating among council housing tenants.<sup>268</sup> Naturally, the higher the income level and occupational status, the more spending on home decorations and repairs.<sup>269</sup>

Presumably, gardening and home decorating were done mainly at weekends. A large scale household survey conducted in the late 1940s revealed that the most popular home activities in the evening were, apart from 'having a meal' and 'resting', radio listening and reading. Every evening, no less than 20 per cent of households switched on the radio for at least half an hour, and over 11 per cent of people at home spent more than half an hour reading after 7 p.m.<sup>270</sup>

### Radio listening

The popularity of the radio in the 1940s was reflected by the increased number of sound licences issued. Up to 1950, it rose to over 11.8 million.<sup>271</sup> During the war, the radio was the predominant way of passing spare time. By September 1946, BBC had three domestic services: Home, Light and Third Programmes. In addition, there was a commercial station abroad, Radio Luxemburg, which reopened in July 1946. During the late 1940s, according to BBC audience research<sup>272</sup>, about one in four of the adult population in the United Kingdom listened to the radio in a winter evening (about 9 million adult listeners). In summer the ratio dropped to one in five. The Light Programme was the most popular, attracting about 63 per cent of the total winter evening listeners in 1949. The share of the Home Service was about 36 per cent, while that of the Third was less than one per

cent.<sup>273</sup> Radio Luxembourg attracted more listeners than the Third Programme. In 1949, its average audience size on Sundays was about half those of the Home Service, and in its peak time, about a million people (3 per cent of adult population) listened to the *Top Twenty* programme, a hit parade of pop songs. The main audience for Luxembourg was young and in the southern region. It was also working class. Towards the end of the 1940s, the length of average listening hours to Luxembourg increased by three times despite the total number of listeners remaining the same.<sup>274</sup> The marked difference between the BBC and Luxembourg lay in their attitudes towards playing records. The former was reluctant to play contemporary pop music records even in the late 1950s.<sup>275</sup>

The popularity of BBC services was reflected in the length of time in which people were tuned in. The Light Programme tended to be switched on continuously during the evening, while the Third was listened to in a highly selective way.<sup>276</sup> Among regular listeners in the later 1940s, the average length of weekly listening hours varied from 9.5 hours for the Light Programme; 7 for the Home; and 3 hours for the Third.<sup>277</sup> The class composition of listeners was also related to the popularity of each Programme. In 1949, the Light programme audience contained 79 per cent of the working-class and 21 per cent of the middle class. The Home Service had 69 and 31 per cent, and the Third had 35 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively.<sup>278</sup> Listening often accompanied other domestic activities. Among the evening listeners between 8.30 and 10.30 p.m. in the

late 1940s, just over half did other things, reading, eating or cleaning.<sup>279</sup>

It is undeniable that in the 1950s, the spread of television ownership diminished radio audiences. The average BBC radio audience each day dropped from 6.4 million in 1953 to 4.7 million in 1957.<sup>280</sup> Taking the peak time (6 to 10 p.m.) audience into account, the balance between listening and viewing changed after 1955 when the size of audience was equal (15 per cent each of the total population ).<sup>281</sup> In April 1961, there were about 5 to 7 per cent working-class listeners in the evening, while the figure for television viewers was no less than 40 per cent.<sup>282</sup> There were more evening listeners among those in higher social classes, more skilled and better educated people, and more women and people over 45 years listened to the radio than men and younger people.<sup>283</sup> Fewer parents who had small children listened to the radio than others.<sup>284</sup> The head of BBC listener research department concluded that among the television public, when television programmes were on the air, listening was 'almost completely replaced by "viewing"'.<sup>285</sup> This remained true when the novelty of television disappeared. Radio Luxembourg also suffered. Its advertising revenue and audience fell after the introduction of commercial television in 1955. The all-time peak record for Luxembourg in 1955, with an 8.9 million daily audience, dropped by 75 per cent towards the early 1960s.<sup>286</sup> Nevertheless, according to market research in that year,<sup>287</sup> Radio Luxembourg was still claiming a large audience. 17 per cent all adults (some 6.6 million) were regular listeners

and 28 per cent were occasional ones. Luxembourg was unchanged as a station for young listeners: more than twice as many regular listeners existed in the 16-24 years old age group as in any other age group. The audience remained largely working class, with no appreciable gender nor regional differences.

Overall, 25 million people listened to 'something on sound' everyday in 1960,<sup>288</sup> by which time the decline in radio listening had been halted.<sup>289</sup> R. J. E. Silvey, the Head of BBC Audience Research gave the following diagnosis on the changing role of the radio:

If the days of sound broadcasting's role as the chief provider of mass evening entertainment were numbered, its other roles remained and would even expand. 'Sound' had advantage over television during the day-time; it could cater for minority needs in the evening; and the coming of the portable transistor set and the car-radio would widen its field.<sup>290</sup>

The radio industry was certainly eager to exploit new products such as the transistor receiver. By 1960, sales of portable transistor radios exceeded those of mains-supplied receivers.<sup>291</sup> Radio sales in Britain were dominated by the top five names, with manufacturing concentrated in a small number of factories. The major firms dominating the industry tended to dominate other sectors producing closely related electrical goods, such as the gramophone industry with the Electric and Musical Industries (EMI), Decca and Pye, the leaders.

### Gramophone

The gramophone industry was a rapidly expanding home-oriented entertainment industry in the post-war period. It was estimated that in 1952 the domestic production of gramophone records was between 35 and 40 millions, 'many times the pre-war rate'.<sup>292</sup> Sales steadily grew until 1957 when the figure reached over £14 million. A fall followed in the next two years, but it rose again in 1960.<sup>293</sup> There were various technological developments in the industry. The Decca Record Company introduced the first long play record in 1950,<sup>294</sup> and stereophonic records appeared in 1958.<sup>295</sup>

The post-war gramophone record industry was dominated by the two majors: EMI and Decca Record Company. In 1956, they shared up to 90 per cent of the total output.<sup>296</sup> The remaining 10 per cent of production was shared between 20 small companies. It was these which felt the recession between 1957 and 1958 most strongly. The two biggest companies, on the other hand, raised their sales levels in those years.<sup>297</sup> It seemed impossible for anyone to break with the market. The Rank Organisation, the biggest cinema company in Britain, once tried to enter the record business with the 'Top Rank' label,<sup>298</sup> but it was soon taken over by EMI.<sup>299</sup>

### Television

The growth of television ownership was very rapid throughout the post-war period. In 1946, the number of combined radio and television licences issued was just 15,000. The figure was over 1.4 million in 1952, and reached over 10 million in 1960.<sup>300</sup> Television ownership was clearly linked to class

differences in the early post-war years. In the middle of the 1950s, less than 30 per cent of the working-class adult population had television sets, while ownership among the upper and middle classes reached about 40 per cent.<sup>301</sup>

However, from the end of the 1940s, working-class people had been acquiring television sets at a faster rate than the others. By the end of 1954, therefore, among the total adult television public, working-class people were the majority (59 per cent), against 25 per cent middle class and 16 per cent upper class.<sup>302</sup> By 1957, there was no longer any class difference in the acquiring of television sets,<sup>303</sup> although this did not necessarily mean that television sets were always bought by working-class people. A trade enquiry made in 1958 found that nearly one rental agreement was made for every set sold outright.<sup>304</sup>

The distribution of the viewing public by occupational and educational levels also changed.<sup>305</sup> Television was more appreciated by the less educated among the public. B. P. Emmet showed that in 1954 the less educated within the same income group were more likely to buy television sets first.<sup>306</sup> Another interesting finding was that a family with no more than three children of ages 5 to 15 was most likely to have television sets.<sup>307</sup> The numbers of the television public continued to grow, from just 0.2 per cent (80,000) in 1947 to 86 per cent of the total adult population (more than 33 millions) in 1962.<sup>308</sup>

What do we know of viewing habits? Most viewing took place in the evenings. The average size of the evening television audience at the end of 1952 was less than 6 per

cent of the total adult population.<sup>309</sup> During the final quarter of 1957, the corresponding figure was 19.6 per cent.<sup>310</sup> A detailed BBC survey about the people's activities clearly showed that by the beginning of the 1960s television viewing was the dominant way of spending their leisure time.<sup>311</sup> In April 1961, no less than 40 per cent of the total adult population switched on the television in the evening, with Sunday being the peak.<sup>312</sup> More women than men tended to combine watch television with something else.<sup>313</sup> People under 24 watched far less than other age groups.<sup>314</sup> More working-class people watched than middle class, and the less educated and less skilled also watched more.<sup>315</sup> Parents with children watched more than those without.<sup>316</sup> However, there were other studies which showed that these differences were often negligible. According to viewing enquiries made in the first half of the 1950s, there was no appreciable difference in frequency of viewing by income, occupational or educational backgrounds of the viewers. Age difference mattered more: watching television was most popular among persons aged over 35, and least popular among the young aged between 16 to 24.<sup>317</sup> Market research on ITA viewing in 1960 showed there was no difference in age groups between 16 to 64 years old.<sup>318</sup> The same research showed no appreciable difference between men and women.<sup>319</sup>

During the winter time in 1957 and 1959, on average, about 12 hours a week were spent in the evenings watching television.<sup>320</sup> In summer, the figure was lower by several hours.<sup>321</sup> In 1961, the total average viewing hours per week was 13.30,<sup>322</sup> which meant that less than two hours per day

were spent in front of the television. Although the absolute number of television viewers increased dramatically in the 1950s, the introduction of commercial television in 1955 made little difference to the average length of viewing. In 1959, those with the choice of BBC or Independent Television Authority (ITA) watched television only five minutes more on an average evening than the BBC only viewers.<sup>323</sup>

The launch of the independent commercial television service in 1955 was a successful one in terms of the popularity of the programmes and it made profits. In areas where the public could receive both BBC and ITA, BBC's share of the audience dropped to 28 per cent in the third quarter of 1957,<sup>324</sup> though the figure recovered to 40 per cent in 1960-61 and was still rising.<sup>325</sup> At first, contracting companies to the ITA did not make any profit. But the autumn of 1956 was a turning point. In the financial year 1957-58, for example, Associated Television Ltd., one of the original programme contractors responsible for providing programmes on weekends in London and weekdays in the Midlands, made the highest profit in that year among British companies in relation to share capital.<sup>326</sup> Its parent company, the Associated British Picture Corporation (ABPC), the second largest film production, distribution and exhibition company which owned 339 cinemas in 1960, made a larger profits from television than from its original film trade.<sup>327</sup> The Rank Organisation, the biggest film company in Britain, also started to invest in the television industry towards the end of the 1950s.<sup>328</sup> All contracting programme companies were financed by other big companies in media and entertainments,



such as press, radio relay, film and theatre.<sup>329</sup> Among the shareholders of Associated Television, the proprietors of the *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Pictorial*, *Birmingham Post*, and Moss Empires were prominent.<sup>330</sup> Associated Newspapers, which owned the *Daily Mail*, was the main financier to Associated-Rediffusion, the weekday programme provider in London. Granada Television Network Ltd, which was responsible for weekday programmes in the North, was owned by the Granada Theatres Ltd., cinema and theatre owner.<sup>331</sup> Even Lord Woolton, the former Conservative party chairman who was instrumental in the introduction of commercial television, was so shocked to discover the huge profits that he sent a private letter to Macmillan suggesting an enquiry.<sup>332</sup>

The production side of the industry was composed of several companies, although in the 1950s, there was a tendency towards mergers. By 1959, Thorn, the largest manufacturer, with one-sixth of the market, acquired HMV and Marconiphone in addition to its own name, Ferguson. The second largest company, Sobell, with 10 per cent of the market, had already bought another company in 1956.<sup>333</sup>

### Reading

During the war, the British people not only listened more than ever; they read too. The wartime boom continued in the immediate post-war period.<sup>334</sup> The British read newspapers more than weeklies, monthlies or books. A Mass-Observation national survey made in 1947 found that one in three did not read books.<sup>335</sup> On the other hand, in the early 1950s,

morning newspapers were read by more than 90 per cent of the total adult population. Evening papers had a 70 per cent readership. Weekly magazines had no less than 75 per cent, and the figure for monthly magazines was no more than 25 per cent.<sup>336</sup> In 1956 it was confirmed that this high level of newspaper reading had no rival in the world.<sup>337</sup> Two contrasting characteristics between book and newspaper readers were, according to the Mass-Observation survey, that marriage reduced book reading but increased newspaper reading, and that teenagers read books most, but they read newspapers least. One point which should be made about the newspaper reading habit was that Sunday was 'a big day for reading' for all social classes.<sup>338</sup> Nearly two-thirds of the total adult population read at least two Sunday papers at the end of the 1940s.<sup>339</sup> It was not a large difference, but the Sunday papers were better patronised not by well-off but by working-class readers, whereas the opposite was true of weekday newspapers.<sup>340</sup>

The newspaper and periodicals industry changed in the post-war period. In the late 1940s, the Royal Commission on the Press found no concentration or monopolistic tendency in any branch of the industry, including distributing agencies.<sup>341</sup> In 1956, the total sales of national morning papers was higher than before the war by two-thirds, and more than half of that increase went to a single newspaper, the *Daily Mirror*.<sup>342</sup> However, between 1956 and 1960, both the circulation and the extent of the readership for the top five daily national morning papers remained at the same level.<sup>343</sup> Although the concentration of ownership

increased, the Royal Commission on the Press 1961-1962 suggested that the influence of the Press was not as great as it had been in the past, emphasising the increasingly important role played by radio and television in forming public opinion.<sup>344</sup>

One of the most successful printing sectors in the post-war period was women's weekly magazines. *Woman's Own* doubled its circulation in 1949-50, to exceed 1,800,000 in 1951.<sup>345</sup> The top two magazines, *Woman* and *Woman's Own* increased their circulations from 2,227,000 to 3,056,000, and 1,770,000 to 2,270,000, respectively, between 1952 and 1960.<sup>346</sup> In 1960, it was estimated that 42 and 36 per cent of adult women read *Woman* and *Woman's Own* respectively. A majority of women read women's magazine by the end of the 1950s.<sup>347</sup> More than a dozen per cent of men also read them.<sup>348</sup>

Books were less popular, but in comparison with other western countries, the British were still the greatest book lovers.<sup>349</sup> There was some evidence which suggested that the book reading public increased in the post-war period: the number of published titles rose from just over 17,000 in 1950 to about 24,000 in 1960<sup>350</sup>; and issues from public libraries also steadily rose from about 306 million in 1949-50 to over 434 million in 1960-61<sup>351</sup>. The book industry consisted of various small units, each of which were quite independent. There was no vertical penetration, unlike the film industry.<sup>352</sup> In 1956, of a total of 3,700 publishing firms, 370 shared 90 per cent of the total turnover. There were about 9,000 booksellers in the same year, of which the

largest chain was W. H. Smith owning 376 shops and about 900 bookstalls.<sup>353</sup> Towards the end of the 1950s, several changes occurred in the book industry. The small size in book prints became less profitable and a few mergers took place, although even the largest publishing groups controlled less than five publishers.<sup>354</sup> The number of titles and the technical nature greatly increased, while the number of fiction titles dropped.<sup>355</sup> Commercial libraries had seriously declined by the middle of the 1950s.<sup>356</sup>

In 1955, home sales distribution of total turnover was 73.6 per cent through ordinary sales; 11.4 per cent educational contractors; 7.5 per cent public libraries; 5.7 per cent circulating libraries; 1.8 per cent book clubs.<sup>357</sup> However, according to a survey made in the first half of the 1960s, people obtained books to read in a very different way: 37 per cent borrowed from the library; 32 per cent borrowed or were given books by friends or relatives; only 24 per cent bought.<sup>358</sup> Mann and Burgoyne, relying on studies made in a later period, inferred that borrowing from friends and relatives might be 'the most important single source of books for working class readers'.<sup>359</sup>

### Motoring

As we noted earlier, it was only in the early 1950s that public expenditure on motoring returned to its pre-war level. However, the number of private cars reached its pre-war level by 1948. The number increased steadily from just less than 2 millions in 1948 to more than 5.5 millions in 1960.<sup>360</sup> There were more marked and sustained class

differences in the ownership of cars than that of television sets. Unlike in the case of television sets, the difference did not easily disappear even in the late 1950s. The price of a car and its maintenance costs were generally much higher than those for television sets. In 1953, while a second-hand car could be bought as cheaply as £50, most models cost several hundreds: on the other hand, the average television set cost only between £60 and £100.<sup>361</sup>

The Hulton Survey made in 1948 showed that 5.4 per cent of working-class men owned cars against 44.4 per cent of the middle and upper classes.<sup>362</sup> The same survey also showed that women's ownership was far less, being 0.6 and 8.7 per cent of working and middle classes, respectively, though the number of women drivers must have been much more than that. Another characteristic was that owning cars was a phenomenon predominantly for those aged between 35 and 64.<sup>363</sup> Car ownership was higher among home owners than those renting dwellings. In 1953, more than 20 per cent of home owners had a car, while about 14 per cent of those renting furnished houses and only 7.4 per cent of those renting council houses had one.<sup>364</sup> By 1954, the difference in car ownership between working-class people and their superiors had grown not narrowed, for both men and women.<sup>365</sup> However, in the second half of the 1950s, car ownership among working-class households seemingly increased at a faster rate than ever. In 1957, it was estimated that about 12 per cent of working-class homes owned a car, while television ownership was 45 per cent.<sup>366</sup> In 1960, the combined percentage of car ownership among working-class and lower middle-class

households was 23.9, against 47.4 for the rest of the superior classes.<sup>367</sup> Zweig's enquiry into industrial workers in the late 1950s showed ownership varied from 12 per cent in Workington to 40 per cent at a Vauxhall car factory in Birmingham where the firm provided special arrangements to help employees to buy.<sup>368</sup> Willmott's study of a London County Council estate in the same period found that only a fifth of households had a car.<sup>369</sup> There were certainly considerable regional differences in ownership: one national study concluded that in general, ownership increased with 'rising income and social class' and fell with 'increasing urbanisation and population density' and 'towards north'.<sup>370</sup> Within the small minority of the working-class car owners, pleasure motoring at weekends and on holiday with families, as well as repairing and tinkering with the car, often occupied a good deal of their leisure time.<sup>371</sup>

### Holiday habits

Immediately after the war, the British restarted their pre-war holiday habits. Like many other leisure industries in the late 1940s seaside resorts experienced unprecedented booms.<sup>372</sup> But various surveys showed that even at this peak, only half of the population took a holiday away from home.<sup>373</sup> In 1946 and 1947, about 40 per cent took no holiday away from home at all, and about 10 per cent day trips only.<sup>374</sup> It was only in the second half of the 1950s that numbers of British holiday makers began to rise. Between 1949-56, those who took at least four nights holiday

away from home was about half of the population. The corresponding figure was 60 per cent by 1962.<sup>375</sup> The Social Survey showed that the habit of day trips had also increased, reaching 15 per cent of the population in 1960.<sup>376</sup> However, the possibility of taking a holiday lessened as the social class lowered and as the income level went down: the percentage of holiday makers among the working classes was below that of the national average.<sup>377</sup> There was no appreciable gender difference (though more women tended to go on holiday), and older people over 55 took their holidays than the rest of the population.

By far the most popular type of holiday resort was the seaside. In the immediate post-war years, nearly two-thirds of holiday makers went there.<sup>378</sup> This was unchanged throughout the period.<sup>379</sup> The form of holiday travel, however, changed significantly, as the following table shows:

**Table 1:18 Distribution of holiday travel, 1951-1960.<sup>380</sup>**

	rail	car	coach or bus	
				(%)
1951	47	27	27	
1961	27	48	19	

Another changing aspect was the type of accommodation. In the late 1940s and the early 1950s, well over 30 per cent of British holiday makers stayed at the homes of their friends or relatives, the most popular option.<sup>381</sup> About the same proportion stayed at unlicensed hotels or boarding houses. Less than 5 per cent made use of holiday camps at that

time.<sup>382</sup> By 1960, fewer people stayed at friends and relatives, or at unlicensed hotels and boarding houses, whereas more people went to holiday camps, hostels and caravans.<sup>383</sup>

Holidays abroad were also increasing in the 1950s. Official figures showed that those taking holidays abroad more than doubled between 1951 and 1961 when the estimated total was 4 million.<sup>384</sup> Although such holidays remained a minority experience, the tendency to become the cross-section experience was already noticed by the early 1950s, when over a third were clerical or industrial wage-earners.<sup>385</sup> However, one unchanged aspect in the holiday habit was its timing. Despite various campaigns organised by government agencies, the formidable congestion of the peak period in July and August remained.<sup>386</sup>

The tourist industry as a whole was big business. In 1955, total expenditure in the United Kingdom consisted of £685 millions spent by the British travellers and £111 millions by overseas visitors.<sup>387</sup> Although the industry was one of the largest in the national economy, it consisted of many separated and fairly independent units, often very small scale. Hotels and boarding houses were not in the same market and their interests were often divided.<sup>388</sup> The former mainly looked after the wealthier or foreign customers, while the latter concentrated on the domestic holiday maker, and often only opened in summer. Apart from a few hotels owned by the brewers and others, the hotel trade itself was again made up of 'innumerable small units'.<sup>389</sup> The fortune of the trade also varied from resort to resort.



Travel agents had a similar character. The total number of approved travel agents were about 450 with 800 offices all over the country. The biggest was Thomas Cook, which employed 12,000 people, but the 'astonishing proliferation of small travel agencies in recent years' was noticed in 1959.<sup>390</sup>

## Notes to Chapter 1

- 1 G. D. N. Worswick, 'Personal Income Policy', in G. D. N. Worswick and P. H. Ady, *The British Economy 1945-1950* (1952), p. 326. The figures for actual weekly earnings are for male workers aged 21 and over, and are calculated based on Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1968* (1971), Table 40. The relationship between the figures of actual earnings and the index is not exact, because the latter was calculated not based on the official statistics, but based on a more realistic measurement: see, the explanatory notes on cost of living index in Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics* (1971), p. 11.
- 2 Ibid., Table 40.
- 3 Ibid., Table 49.
- 4 In 1947, the cost of living index was officially replaced by the retail index: see, *ibid.*, p. 11.
- 5 K. G. J. C. Knowles, 'Wages and Productivity', in G. D. N. Worswick and P. H. Ady, *The British Economy in the Nineteen-Fifties* (1962), p. 536.
- 6 Calculated based on Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics* (1971), Tables 40 and 49.
- 7 Ministry of Labour, *Report of an Enquiry into Household Expenditure in 1953-54* (1957), Table 6.
- 8 Ibid., Table 7.
- 9 Calculated from Table 17 in *Census 1961. England and Wales. Household Composition Tables* (1966).
- 10 D. Seers, 'National Income, Production and Consumption', in G. D. N. Worswick and P. H. Ady, *The British Economy 1945-1950* (1952), p. 57.
- 11 I. M. D. Little, 'Government and the Economy', in Worswick and Ady, *The British Economy* (1962), pp. 285-89.
- 12 My account relies on the article, 'The Shorter Working Week', *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (November 1961), pp. 445-46.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics* (1971), Tables 43-45, 49.
- 15 E. G. Whybrew, 'Overtime and the Reduction of the Working Week: A Comparison of British and Dutch Experience', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 2 (1964), pp. 149-64.
- 16 *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (September 1944), p. 144.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid., p. 145.
- 19 *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (December 1946), p. 344.
- 20 Ibid., p. 346.
- 21 Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics* (1971), Table 34. Figures for the total number of manual workers were calculated based on *Census 1951. England and Wales: Industry Tables* (1957), Table 9; *Census 1961. England and Wales: Industry Tables, Part 1* (1966), Table 6.

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- 22 *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (April 1951), pp. 135-140.
  - 23 *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (May, 1951), p. 157.
  - 24 Central Statistical Office, *National Income Expenditure 1964* (1964), Table 19. Note: 'Motoring' includes motor cars and motor and pedal cycles, either bought as new or second hand (See, *ibid.*, p. 88).
  - 25 My calculation follows the practice made by G. D. H. Cole, in his book, *The Post-War Condition of Britain* (1956), Table 59. However, his calculations were based on the Blue Book on National Expenditure 1954. I recalculated the figures based on a Blue Book on National Income and Expenditure for 1964, in which the revised and consistent estimates for the period throughout between 1946 and 1960 can be obtained.
  - 26 Calculation based on, Central Statistical Office, *National Income and Expenditure 1964* (1964), Table 18.
  - 27 On the rapid growth in the demand for consumer durable goods in the 1950s, see, M. Hall, 'The Consumer Capital and Labour Market', in Worswick and Ady, *The British Economy* (1962), pp. 429-34.
  - 28 On wartime changes in patterns of national consumption, see the official publication, *The Impact of the War on Civilian Consumption* (1945), especially, pp. 55-61, 119-31.
  - 29 Seers, 'National Income, Production and Consumption', in Worswick and Ady, *The British Economy* (1952), Table 7 and p. 48.
  - 30 H. E. Browning and A. A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and Cinema-Going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A (General)*, Part II (1954), Table 1; *HC Debs*, vol. 633, cols. WA37-38, 25 January 1961.
  - 31 Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas', pp. 135-36. On average, British people went to cinema 28 times which was the highest. The figures for United States, Italy, France, and Japan were 23, 14, 9 and 8 respectively.
  - 32 M. Abrams, 'The British Cinema Audience', *Hollywood Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1947), p. 156.
  - 33 L. Moss and K. Box, 'The Cinema Audience', *Wartime Social Survey* (1943), reprinted in J. P. Mayer, *British Cinemas and Their Audience* (1948), p. 253-54; K. Box, 'The Cinema and the Public', *Social Survey*, N.S. 106 (1946), p. 17;
  - 34 Mass-Observation Archive, File Report 3067, 'A Report on Work and Leisure' (November 1948), p. 12. In this survey, a national sample of 2040 persons were interviewed.
  - 35 Abrams, 'The British Cinema Audience', p. 156.
  - 36 *Ibid.*
  - 37 Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas', p. 145.
  - 38 *IPA National Readership Surveys 1960. Special Interest Groups: Tables relating to September 1959-June 1960* (1960), Table 17A and 18A. 'Regular' meant those who frequented the cinema once a week or more often; 'Occasionally' were those visited the cinema less than once a week but at least once a month'; and

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- 'Infrequently' were those visited the cinema less than once a month.
- 39 Already in 1954, two statisticians observed the same tendency. See, Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas', pp. 145-46.
- 40 The figure was calculated based on Table 11 in Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas'.
- 41 The survey was made by the Screen Advertising Association in September 1960. The figure was quoted in J. Spraas, *The Decline of the Cinema* (1962), p. 62, n. 6.
- 42 IPA National Readership Surveys 1960. Special Interest Groups (1960), Table 17A.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Spraas, *The Decline of the Cinema* (1962), Table 8.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Cmd. 7837, *Distribution and Exhibition of Cinematograph Films* (1949), p. 12.
- 47 Ibid., p. 13.
- 48 PEP, 'Film Business', *Planning*, vol. XVIII, no. 341 (1952), p. 251.
- 49 Spraas, *The Decline of the Cinema* (1962), p. 90.
- 50 Census 1951. *England and Wales: Industry Tables* (1957), Table 1, and Census 1961. *England and Wales: Industry Tables: Part 1* (1966), Table 1.
- 51 P. Perilli, 'Statistical Survey of the British Film Industry', the Appendix to J. Curran and V. Porter (ed.), *British Cinema History* (1983), Table 4.
- 52 The figures were estimated based on Table 21, in Spraas, *The Decline of the Cinema* (1962).
- 53 Perilli, 'Statistical Survey of the British Film Industry', Table 6.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 PEP, 'The British Film Industry 1958', *Planning*, vol. XXIV, no. 424 (1958), p. 167.
- 56 Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas', Table 2. Another estimated figures for admissions to various entertainments for 1949 was much higher than those estimated by Browning and Sorrell: theatre and all other taxable entertainments shared about 13.5% and all the sports did 10.3% (*The Economist*, 19 May 1951, p. 1146). These figures were higher, mainly because the figures included the estimate of non-taxable admissions, whose entertainments duty were exempt for various reasons.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Calculated base on the figure in Table 6, in *ibid.*
- 59 Mass-Observation Archive, File Report 3067, pp. 18-19; T. Cauter and J. S. Downham, *The Communication of Ideas* (1954), pp. 131-33.
- 60 Compare Table 39 and 40 in Cauter and Downham, *The Communication* (1954).
- 61 Mass-Observation Archive, File Report 3067, p. 18.
- 62 *HC Debs*, vol. 555, col. 351, 26 June 1956. According to an Arts Council source, three per cent of the British citizens were classified as the repertory theatre-goers, though this estimate was probably the most

- 
- optimistic one. See, *The Economist*, 29 April 1950, p. 935.
- 63 The figure was probably for the theatres outside London. The accounts in this paragraph draw on W. E. Williams, 'The Economic and Social Aspects of the Theatre', the draft for the Shute Lectures at the University of Liverpool on 2 and 3 March 1953. This document can be found in the file, PRO, T 227/269.
- 64 These figures were taken from Arts Council, *Housing the Arts in Great Britain, Part I* (1959), pp. 11-12; *The Economist*, 28 March 1953, p. 853 and 3 July 1954, p. 11.
- 65 The Theatre Entertainment Tax Committee, summary of a memorandum submitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, February 1955. This document can be found in the file, BCL, ABCF/23/61.
- 66 On the role of the Conservative Government played in changing the structure of entertainments tax, see Chapter 3.
- 67 *HC Debs*, vol. 551, col. 837, 17 April 1956.
- 68 Arts Council, *Housing the Arts in Great Britain, Part II* (1961), pp. 16 and Appendix C.
- 69 *The Economist*, 29 December 1951, p. 1574 and 28 March 1953, p. 853.
- 70 Arts Council, *Housing the Arts in Great Britain, Part II* (1961), pp. 9-11.
- 71 *HC Debs*, vol. 555, col. 323, 26 June 1956.
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- 73 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- 74 Coventry is the leading case. See, later chapters.
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- 76 *The Economist*, 15 October 1960, p. 229.
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- 87 PEP, 'Economics of the Orchestra', p. 92.
- 88 PEP, *Sponsorship of Music* (1966), p. 52.

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- 89 Cauter and Downham, *The Communication* (1954), pp. 136-37.
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- 91 Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas', Table 2.
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- 93 *The Economist*, 14 February 1953, pp. 402.
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- 95 PEP, 'The Football Industry - I', p. 157.
- 96 A. Giddens, 'Sport and Society in Contemporary England', (MA Thesis, London University, 1961), pp. 134-35; J. Hennessy, 'The Revolution in Sport', *Lloyds Bank Review*, no. 57 (1960), p. 35.
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- 98 PEP, 'The Football Industry - I', p. 160.
- 99 *HC Debs*, vol. 416, cols. 1557-58, 29 November 1945.
- 100 PEP, 'The Football Industry - II', p. 207.
- 101 Giddens, 'Sport and Society', pp. 137.
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- 103 Giddens, 'Sport and Society', pp. 137.
- 104 Mason, 'Football', p. 162.
- 105 *Ibid.*, p. 182.
- 106 *HC Debs*, vol. 515, col. 2125, 20 May 1953.
- 107 *HC Debs*, vol. 555, col. 123, 25 June 1956.
- 108 *HC Debs*, vol. 515, col. 2001, 19 May 1953.
- 109 *HC Debs*, vol. 500, col. 208, 6 May 1952; vol. 502, col. 1293, 18 June 1952.
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- 113 PEP, 'The Cricket Industry', *Planning*, vol. XXII, no. 401 (1956), pp. 162-63.
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- 120 Cmd. 8190, *Royal Commission on Betting, Lotteries and Gaming 1949-1951, Report* (1951), p. 151 and 154. In pre-war periods, the figure was estimated as between 20 to 25 millions.
- 121 *HC Debs*, vol. 555, col. 151, 25 June 1956.
- 122 Kemsley and Ginsburg, 'Betting in Britain', p. 26.
- 123 G. Browne, *Patterns of British Life* (1950), Table 64. The Social Survey (Kemsley and Ginsburg, 'Betting in Britain'.) estimated that more people visited dog-

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- 124 *Royal Commission on Betting, Lotteries and Gaming, Minutes of Evidence* (1950), pp. 253 and 254.
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  - 126 *HC Debs*, vol. 555, col. 151, 25 June 1956.
  - 127 Kemsley and Ginsburg, 'Betting in Britain', p. 26.
  - 128 *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8 and 18.
  - 129 The figures after 1947 are taken from Cmd. 8190, p. 18. Other figures are taken or estimated from various statistics in *ibid.*, Appendix II.
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  - 132 Estimated from the statistics in Central Statistical Office, *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, no. 86 (February 1953), Table 135 and no. 189 (September 1961), Table 150. The football pool betting duty was imposed at the rate of 30 per cent. since 1949.
  - 133 Kemsley and Ginsburg, 'Betting in Britain', p. 1.
  - 134 On this characteristic of the horse-race gambling, see, *Ibid*, p. 3.
  - 135 Cited in *The Economist*, 23 July 1949, p. 173.
  - 136 Kemsley and Ginsburg, 'Betting in Britain', p. 2.
  - 137 Browne, *Patterns* (1950), Table 65.
  - 138 *Ibid.*, p. 65.
  - 139 Calculated from Table 65 in *ibid.* 'Working classes' included 'Class E' which is described 'poor' such as pensioners and unemployed.
  - 140 Kemsley and Ginsburg, 'Betting in Britain', p. 2.
  - 141 The former estimate was in *ibid*, p. 2, and the latter was in Browne, *Patterns* (1950), Table 68.
  - 142 This was also confirmed in the 1947 Mass-Observation survey: *The Economist*, 23 July 1949, p. 173.
  - 143 Browne, *Patterns* (1950), Table 68.
  - 144 Kemsley and Ginsburg, 'Betting in Britain', p. 6.
  - 145 *HC Debs*, vol. 523, col. 1595, 12 February 1954.
  - 146 *HC Debs*, vol. 523, col. 1581, 12 February 1954.
  - 147 *HC Debs*, vol. 613, col. 847, 16 November 1959.
  - 148 See, M. Clapson, *A Bit of a Flutter* (1992), pp. 166-67.
  - 149 *Census 1961. England and Wales: Industry Tables Part I* (1966), p. LI.
  - 150 *Brewers' Almanack 1966* (1966), pp. 48, 52-53.
  - 151 *Ibid*, p. 46.
  - 152 J. Vaizey, *Brewing Industry 1886-1951* (1960), p. 69. In Scotland, only 80 per cent were tied houses.
  - 153 Calculated from the figures used in *ibid.*, p. 76.
  - 154 *The Economist*, 18 June 1960, p. 1226; 27 August 1960, p. 833.

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- 155 See, for example, *the Economist*, 2 May 1953, p. 319; Vaizey, *Brewing Industry* (1960), p. 159.
  - 156 *The Hulton Readership Survey 1947* (1947), p. 34. 'Regular' means those person who drank more than once a week.
  - 157 *The Hulton Readership Survey 1955* (1955), p. 42.
  - 158 *The Economist*, 20 October 1951. See also, *ibid.*, 31 December 1949.
  - 159 *The Economist*, 15 February 1958, p. 606. Canned beer shared less than one per cent.
  - 160 It was estimated in 1960 that, in the industrial North, relationship between draught and bottled were 20/80, while in the South it was 60/40. See, *The Economist*, 18 June 1960, p. 1225.
  - 161 *The Economist*, 16 May 1959, p. 660; 12 November 1960, p. 712; 10 December 1960, p. 1179; 24 December 1960, p. 1348.
  - 162 On soft drinks, see, *The Economist*, 31 May 1952, pp. 603-06 and 17 September 1954, p. 207. On wine consumption, see, *The Economist*, 4 February 1956, pp. 361-62.
  - 163 *The Economist*, 30 December 1950, p. 1214 and 2 May 1953, p. 319.
  - 164 Calculated from the statistics in *Brewers' Almanack 1966* (1966), p. 86.
  - 165 Mitchells and Butlers Ltd. is the case in point. See, its company report, *The Economist*, 15 December 1956, p. 1012.
  - 166 *The Economist*, 14 August 1954, p. 543; 28 November 1959, pp. 917 and 920.
  - 167 Calculated based on the figures in *IPA National Readership Survey 1960. Special Interest Groups* (1960), pp. 75, 76 and 106.
  - 168 Vaizey, *Brewing Industry* (1960), p. 156; *The Economist*, 18 December 1954, p. 1014; 7 December 1957, p. 903.
  - 169 In 1951, the Union donated £103,123 to various charities, wholly raised by its member clubs' effort. See, *The Club and Institute Journal* (August 1951), p. 2.
  - 170 *The Club and Institute Journal* (August 1954), p. 3.
  - 171 *The Club and Institute Journal* (April 1947), p. 3; *ibid.* (April 1950), p. 6. In 1950, 500 members enroled the diploma courses and 60 club men attended the spring schools. See, *The Club and Institute Journal* (December 1950), p. 7. See, also *The Club and Institute Journal* (June 1953), p. 1.
  - 172 The figure was for the beginning of the 1950s. See, the article in *The Club and Institute Journal* (March 1952), p. 2.
  - 173 *The Club and Institute Journal* (January 1946), p. 6.
  - 174 *The Club and Institute Journal* (May 1951), p. 3. In 1948, responding to the General Secretary's fifth convalescence appeal, the total sum of £22,000 was contributed from member clubs. See, *ibid.* (February 1948), p. 1. However, this Nantwich home was unpopular because the club men liked seaside homes, and despite the excess demands for place at other four homes



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- existed, the Nantwich was closed down in 1954. See, G. Tremlett, *Clubmen* (1987), p. 202.
- 175 *The Club and Institute Journal* (April 1946), p. 5;  
 ibid. (May 1946), p. 6.
- 176 *The Club and Institute Journal* (March 1950), p. 7;  
 ibid. (January 1951), p. 10.
- 177 J. Taylor, *From Self-Help to Glamour: The Working Men's Club 1860-1972* (Oxford, 1972), p. 79.
- 178 Wilmut, *Kindly Leave the Stage!* (1989), p. 218. The exclusive atmosphere of the club was well recorded in Taylor, *From Self-Help to Glamour* (1972), pp. 84-87.
- 179 Wilmut, *Kindly Leave the Stage!* (1989), p. 194.
- 180 *The Club and Institute Journal* (March 1950), p. 2.
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- 182 *The Club and Institute Journal* (March 1951), p. 2.
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- 184 The number of the registered clubs in 1957 was 21,998. See, *Brewers' Almanack 1966* (1966), p. 86.
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- 188 Tremlett, *Clubmen* (1987), p. 203.
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- 191 *The Club and Institute Journal* (April 1954), p. 2.
- 192 In 1945, there were already 1,500 clubs with 400,000 to 500,000 membership. See, Lord Beveridge, *Voluntary Action. A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (1948), p. 107.
- 193 *Britain. An Official Handbook* (1961 edition), p. 24.
- 194 Cauter and Downham, *The Communication* (1954), p. 71.
- 195 *The Economist*, 19 May 1951, p. 1146.
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- 197 According to the UNESCO estimate, in the middle of the 1950s, 84 per cent. of all participants in sport over school-leaving age in Britain were those aged under 30. Cited in Giddens, 'Sport and Society', p. 233.
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- 199 Wolfenden Committee on Sport, *Sport and the Community* (1960), p. 9.
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- 203 Giddens, 'Sport and Society', p. 234.
- 204 It seems that the decline of association football organised at amateur level started not in the post-war period but somewhat earlier, because it was claimed that 40,000 amateur clubs affiliated to the FA in the pre-war period. See, *HC Debs*, vol. 416, col. 1558, 29 November 1945.
- 205 *HC Debs*, vol. 502, col. 1293, 18 June 1952.
- 206 *HC Debs*, vol. 515, col. 2105, 20 May 1953; vol. 555, col. 123, 25 June 1956.

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- 207 Hennessy, 'The Revolution in Sport', p. 35.  
 208 *HC Debs*, vol. 481, col. 856, 20 November 1950.  
 209 *Ibid.*; *The Midland Angler*, vol. 5, no. 10 (March 1951), p. 7.
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 213 *The Economist*, 11 July 1959, pp. 76-77.  
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 215 *The Club and Institute Journal* (April 1954), p. 2.  
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 219 S. G. Jones, *Workers At Play. A Social and Economic History of Leisure 1918-1939* (1986), pp. 63-65.  
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 222 Central Statistical Office, *Social Trends*, no. 7 (1976), Table 10.11. The figures for Holiday Fellowship were taken from National Register Archive, 'A list of the Historical Records of the Holiday Fellowship' (NRA 24468).  
 223 On the process of winding up of the British Workers' Sports Association, see, the files in MRC, MSS 292/803.3/4a-4b.  
 224 Cauter and Downham, *The Communication* (1954), pp. 68 and 71.  
 225 *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 70-71.  
 226 Lord Beveridge, *Voluntary Action* (1948), p. 136.  
 227 *Britain. An Official Handbook* (1961 edition), p. 23.  
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 229 R. C. Chambers, 'A Study of Three Voluntary Organisations', in D. V. Glass (ed.), *Social Mobility in Britain* (1954), p. 393.  
 230 *Britain. An Official Handbook* (1961 edition), p. 24.  
 231 See an interesting observation by R. C. Chambers, in her 'A Study of Three Voluntary Organisations', in Glass, *Social Mobility* (1954), pp. 395-99.  
 232 R. C. Chambers, 'A Study of Three Voluntary Organisations', in Glass, *Social Mobility* (1954), pp. 389 and 392.  
 233 See, *Industrial Welfare* vol. XXXIII, no. 4 (July-August 1952), p. 115.

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  - 235 One of the largest works sports associations was in Sheffield. It was founded in 1919 and 136 member firms in 1948: *Industrial Welfare*, vol. XXX, no. 320 (September-October 1948), p. 164. On Norwich and Hull, see, *ibid.*, vol. XXX, no. 317 (March-April 1948), p. 62 and vol. XXX, no. 319 (July-August 1948), p. 127.
  - 236 Gorer, *Exploring English Character* (1955), p. 68.
  - 237 Britain. *An Official Handbook* (1961 edition), p. 175.
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  - 240 Central Statistical Office, *National Income and Expenditure 1964* (1964), Table 19.
  - 241 W. F. F. Kemsley and D. Ginsburg, 'Expenditure on Repairs and Alterations to Domestic Property, on Gardens, Removals, Domestic Service and Pets', *The Social Survey*, N.S. 704/1 (1949), Table 3. See also, PEP, 'Home Ownership', *Planning*, vol. XVIII, no. 337 (1952), p. 187.
  - 242 *Census 1961. England and Wales: Household Composition Tables* (1966), Table 4.
  - 243 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Housing Tables Part II: Tenure and Household Arrangements* (1965), Table 23.
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  - 245 PEP, 'Clubs, Societies and Democracy', *Planning*, no. 263 (1947), p. 5.
  - 246 Calculated based on Table II in P. G. Allen, 'Evening Activities in the Home', *The Sociological Review*, vol. XLIII (1951), p. 6. Adult means those who were over 15 years old.
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  - 248 *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.
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  - 251 J. A. R. Pimlot, 'A Nation of Gardeners?', *New Society* (23 April 1964), pp. 18-19.
  - 252 *Ibid.*
  - 253 J. A. Cook, 'Gardens on Housing Estates. A Survey of User Attitudes and Behaviour on Seven Layouts', *The Town Planning Review*, vol. 39, no. 3 (1968), p. 218.
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  - 255 Cited in *The Economist*, 21 June 1958, p. 1062.
  - 256 A survey made by The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, cited in *The Economist*, 14 December 1957, p. 934.
  - 257 *The Hulton Readership Survey 1952* (1952), p. 42.
  - 258 Pimlot, 'A Nation of Gardeners?', p. 18; Cook, 'Gardens on Housing Estates.', p. 218.
  - 259 Cauter and Downham, *The Communication* (1954), pp. 84-85.

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- 260 Pimlot, 'A Nation of Gardeners?', p. 19. In 1953 Derby survey, only 10 per cent of all interviewees regarded gardening as a hobby, while 36 per cent replied that they did gardening 'regularly or frequently': Cauter and Downham, *The Communication* (1954), p. 85, n. 1.
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- 262 *The New Statesman and Nation*, 23 October 1954, p. 500.
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- 280 *The Economist*, 6 April 1957, p. 27.
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  - 292 *The Economist*, 18 August 1956, p. 581.
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  - 294 PEP, 'The Gramophone Record', *Planning*, vol. XVIII, no. 335 (1951), p. 142.
  - 295 *The Economist*, 20 September 1958, p. 954.
  - 296 *The Economist*, 18 August 1956, p. 581: The EMI was the largest-record making company in the world at that time. See also, *The Economist*, 3 May 1958, p. 434 and 20 September 1958, p. 953.
  - 297 On Decca, see, *The Economist*, 18 July 1959, p. 175 and 30 January 1960, p. 475. On EMI, see, *The Economist*, 21 November 1959. No less than half of the turnover of both company groups came from the gramophone records sales.
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- 336 *The Hulton Readership Survey 1952* (1952), p. 30.
- 337 PEP, 'Performance of the Press', *Planning*, vol. XXII, no. 397 (1956), p. 87.
- 338 Browne, *Patterns* (1950), p. 69.
- 339 *Ibid*, p. 80.
- 340 Mass-Observation, *The Press and its Readership* (1949), p. 12.
- 341 Cmd. 7700, *Royal Commission on the Press 1947-1949. Report* (1949), pp. 56 and 175.
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- 343 See, *National Readership Survey. Tables relating to April - December and October-December 1956* (1957), Table 1A; *IPA National Readership Surveys 1960* (1961), Table 1A; and PEP, 'What's in the Press?', p. 34.
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- 345 PEP, 'Economics of Book Publishing', *Planning*, vol. XVIII, no. 330 (1951), p. 38.
- 346 *The Economist*, 28 November 1953, p. 643; *IPA National Readership Surveys 1960* (1961), Table 9A. According to *The Economist*, in 1938 *Woman* had a 750,000 and *Woman's Own* had a 357,000 circulation each.
- 347 Browne, *Patterns* (1950), pp. 69 and 85.
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## Chapter 2: The Labour Governments and Leisure, 1945-51

During the Second World War, the state intervened more and more in people's leisure, primarily to maintain morale and welfare, and thus the war effort on the home front. However, the intervention usually comprised emergency measures, and soon after the war ended, most state support for cultural, educational and entertaining activity was withdrawn. What did the post-war Labour Government try to do and actually achieve in the sphere of leisure? Labour had no single administrative machinery dealing with leisure nor single leisure policy as such. This chapter will examine several policy areas, including education, town and country planning, taxation, arts and industrial policies, which seem important to understand the Labour Government's peace-time roles and attitudes to leisure.

### Return to peacetime

There were many urgent tasks which the Government had to carry out in normalising people's leisure life, which had been severely disrupted by the war. First of all, it needed to abolish wartime measures which restricted, directly or indirectly, people's enjoyment. During the war, many beaches, open spaces, footpaths, playing fields, sports grounds, halls, museums, libraries, and hotels, as well as houses and flats, were closed or requisitioned by the Services and other government departments. After the victory in Europe, it was widely expected these sites and premises would be quickly released. It was also anticipated that the

Government would restore pre-war travel facilities for civilians, especially during the holiday seasons. A relaxation of controls on various goods was eagerly awaited; the public wanted more petrol for pleasure motoring, paper for reading materials, alcohol beverages and sports.

The derequisitioning of sites and premises was realised relatively quickly, though not without difficulties. There were 286 footpaths closed during the war, of which less than half had become available to the public by June 1946.<sup>1</sup> As time went on, however, more encouraging signs appeared that showed the release of requisitioned premises was proceeding steadily. By the end of February 1946, about 95 per cent of the occupied film studios had been released, the aim to increase British film production.<sup>2</sup> Eleven months later, 74 per cent of 921 requisitioned entertainments premises had been released and out of 982 wartime requisitioned playing fields and sports clubs, only 259 were still occupied. More than 84 per cent of the 1,532 clubs taken over by wartime government departments had been released.<sup>3</sup> In early 1947, there were only ten provincial museums and art galleries in the hands of Government departments.<sup>4</sup> By October 1947, about 92 per cent of the requisitioned hotels, restaurants, guest and boardinghouses, hostels and holiday camps had been released.<sup>5</sup> Sports grounds, which had lost 4,500 acres per year to agricultural purposes during the war, were increasing its total acreage at more than 8,000 acres per year between 1945 and 1951.<sup>6</sup>

Some rationing and control of goods and raw materials which effected people's leisure lives were tightened after

the war. The basic petrol ration for private motorists was reduced by one-third in the summer of 1947.<sup>7</sup> Within a month, it was announced that from October the ration would be completely withdrawn.<sup>8</sup> From the same date, foreign travel allowances were also suspended.<sup>9</sup> Such measures, along with the introduction of a 75 per cent levy on foreign films, were taken in order to save dollars. Although the basic ration for pleasure motoring was reinstated in June 1948, it was only at one-third of the amount of the previous level, allowing about 90 miles motoring a month.<sup>10</sup> It was only in the spring of 1950 that all controls on petrol were abolished.<sup>11</sup>

Another example was the shortage of sports goods. Shortages of labour and raw materials, as well as the heavy demand from British Forces abroad, made it difficult for civilians to get such items.<sup>12</sup> It was only at the end of 1948 that the Board of Trade announced it was removing licensing control over their manufacture and supply.<sup>13</sup> Control over paper remained a little longer. In 1948, paper supply to the publishers was only about 60 per cent of their pre-war consumption.<sup>14</sup> It was only in March 1949, just after the end of clothes rationing, that control over paper to book publishers was lifted.<sup>15</sup> The restrictions on paper for magazines and periodicals were removed a year later.<sup>16</sup> However, control over the supply of newsprint continued well into the next decade.

Beer, too, was in short supply during the first few post-war years, despite the all time record output in 1946. Because of the shortage of raw materials, such as barley,

hops and sugar, in May 1946, the Ministry of Food limited the levels of standard barrelage.<sup>17</sup> Up to 1948, excessive demand continued to exist,<sup>18</sup> but thereafter, the demand for beer started to decline and production of the raw materials rose. By 1950 the post-war shortage of beer had ended.<sup>19</sup> Alarmed by the decline in the consumption of beer, Cripps allowed an increase in its strength in the 1950 Budget without adding any duty.<sup>20</sup>

### Community centres and youth services

The Government wanted to suspend its wartime financial support to those national organisations, working in the sphere of welfare, recreation and entertainment. The Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), which had been providing entertainment to factory workers as well as troops, was to be wound up in summer of 1946, and thereafter service departments were to provide their own entertainments.<sup>21</sup> In the case of voluntary organisations which had provided social, recreational and welfare facilities primarily for munitions workers,<sup>22</sup> the Ministry of Labour decided to withdraw its financial support at the end of March, 1946. It was agreed between the organisation and the Government that the purpose of these clubs should be changed from a recreational one to an educational one, so that local education authorities could continue to support them under the Education Act, 1944 and the Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937.<sup>23</sup> The War Workers' Clubs' Association, which had 56 clubs with 18,000 members at the end of the war, was to change its name to Citizens' Clubs.<sup>24</sup>

Negotiation with local education authorities started on a club by club basis, with strong backing from the Ministry of Education (MoE).<sup>25</sup>

The further education department of the MoE was keen on the idea that democratic and responsible citizenship should be fostered through the constructive use of leisure time at the existing voluntary organisations and the municipally sponsored community centres.<sup>26</sup> This ideal for post-war British society had some public support. Social research organisations such as Political and Economic Planning and Mass-Observation showed considerable interest in the post-war roles of various kinds of clubs, societies and associations in the local community.<sup>27</sup> They shared the view that a more democratic post-war society could be strengthened through participation of ordinary people in these organisations, believing that an emphasis on leisure would make them more accessible to the people.

As far as the youth service was concerned, there were similar enthusiasms during and immediately after the war. A wartime White Paper took the progressive view that youth leadership should be a profession. The Ministry of Labour and National Service accordingly published the pamphlet *Youth Leadership* as a part of 'Careers for Men and Women Series' in 1945. In the same year, an ambitious official manifesto on the post-war youth service was published by the MoE.<sup>28</sup>

Some legislation already existed to implement these ideals. The local education authorities had a statutory responsibility for providing adequate leisure facilities for

the purpose of further education under the Education Act of 1944.<sup>29</sup> This was not permissive but compulsory. In addition to this, under the Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937, local authorities had power to acquire and provide land, buildings and equipment for educational and social purposes as well as for physical training and recreation.<sup>30</sup> Local authorities might also provide community centre wardens and youth leaders. The MoE had power to make grants in aid.<sup>31</sup>

However, the Ministry soon realised that it was almost impossible to implement these services as initially promised. Because the Ministry's priority had to be repairs and construction of school buildings within a very limited government allocation of building materials and labour, almost no progress was made in providing and improving the necessary accommodation and facilities for further education. Despite a strong demand from the further education branch, senior officials of the Ministry gave the following clear guidance in October 1946: 'no project which needs iron, steel, sheet steel, bricks or timber can be considered at all.'<sup>32</sup>

The officials of the further education branch were alarmed. The branch sent an internal note which claimed that it had already received about 3,000 village hall and playing field schemes, as well as hundreds of proposals related to youth clubs, from voluntary organisations and local authorities, all of which needed material.<sup>33</sup> No substantial concession was made. Eventually, in December 1947, it was made public that no sanction would be granted for any of the

major proposals for community centres, adult education centres and youth clubs.<sup>34</sup> Further restrictions were imposed in 1949. No building works, except for the purpose of maintenance, would be allowed at all.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, the local education authorities were further requested to reduce their expenditure on recreation, social and physical training services.<sup>36</sup> The ban was lifted a year later, but severe restrictions remained: grants were be limited to 30 per cent of the total cost of any scheme which then could not be over £5,000.<sup>37</sup>

Restrictions on the development of playing fields were also imposed in 1949. In the 1946-47 financial year, no less than £115,000 was granted to about 70 playing field schemes.<sup>38</sup> However, in 1949, the MoE announced that only grants concerned with layout work up to £1,000 were to be considered: no building work, even such as changing rooms or lavatory accommodation, was allowed.<sup>39</sup>

However, the Labour Government did manage to increase the total amount of grants offered to the youth service,<sup>40</sup> and this was an achievement, given the extremely difficult economic situation of the period. Nevertheless, by the end of Labour's period in power it was apparent that wartime ideals in both youth and community services were in retreat. None of the recommendations proposed by official reports on the recruitment and training of youth leaders and community centre wardens were implemented.<sup>41</sup> Although Labour could claim that the number of community centres increased from 90 in wartime to about 400 by 1951, 600 community associations were still 'homeless'.<sup>42</sup>

### Amenities in Town and Country

As the problems caused by the rapid expansion of urban sprawl and the scenic and environmental damage made to the countryside became visible in the inter-war years, the necessity for coherent national planning to control land use had become widely recognised.<sup>43</sup> The Second World War provided unexpected opportunities for tackling these problems.<sup>44</sup> The necessity of centralised maintenance of both urban and countryside amenities, and of the national planning of recreational facilities, was recognised by the wartime government as an essential part of post-war social reconstruction.<sup>45</sup> Wartime White Papers supported this orientation, recommending the preservation of countryside and coastal lines, the creation of National Parks and Forests, and the permanent security of public rights of way.<sup>46</sup>

It was not surprising, however, that the actual priority given to these after 1945 was low. The resettlement of soldiers, the reconstruction of blitzed towns, the construction of new houses and the redevelopment of industry, to name but a few, were the issues that dominated. Nevertheless, the Labour Government succeeded in passing two major pieces of legislation. The first was the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, in which each County Council and County Boroughs were required to draw up comprehensive statutory development plans and submit them to the Government for approval by 1st July 1951. In the Act, each local authority was given powers to purchase land



compulsorily in order to make the best provision of social and recreational amenities, entertainments places, public parks, allotments, open spaces and woodland. This was the first time that a single Ministry took such responsibility, and local authorities acquired such comprehensive powers.<sup>47</sup> The Labour Government had to left office four months after the date for the submission of the development plans. Few of them were approved by that time.<sup>48</sup>

Another major piece of legislation was the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Despite successive recommendations made in White Papers during the war, W. S. Morrison, the Conservative wartime Minister of Town and Country Planning, was very reluctant on the question. It was Lewis Silkin, the incoming Labour Minister of Town and Country Planning, who vigorously pushed the question forward.<sup>49</sup> Two more White Papers were published in July and September 1947,<sup>50</sup> and Silkin embarked on drawing up a draft Bill. However, officials of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning were sceptical about the necessity for the Bill, and Sir Stafford Cripps, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his officials at the Treasury resisted it because of fears about extra expenditure.<sup>51</sup> Hugh Dalton, on the other hand, urged that it should be radical, including unrestricted access to the coast and foreshore and the complete public-ownership of all the National Parks.<sup>52</sup> Dalton was enthusiastic about preserving British heritage and landscape, as well as securing public access to them. In 1946, Dalton raised the maximum rate of death duty to 75 per cent, and encouraged beneficiaries of wills involving land

to make use of a statutory right<sup>53</sup> which allowed them to hand the land over to the government instead of paying death duties. He created the National Land Fund at the same time with £50 million secured from the sale of war stores. This Fund was intended to help various voluntary organisations and trusts whose primary aim was to make the countryside more accessible and encourage outdoor recreation.<sup>54</sup> He further suggested that the money should be available to develop the future National Parks.<sup>55</sup>

In March 1949 Silkin presented the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Bill. This Act led to the establishment of a National Parks Commission, whose responsibility was to designate National Parks, to preserve their natural beauty, and to encourage open-air recreation in their Parks. The Commission remained, however, an advisory body, and the local planning authorities had executive powers to promote general enjoyment of the Parks, supported by special Exchequer grants. During the period of Labour Government, three National Parks were formerly established: the Peak District, the Lake District and Snowdonia.<sup>56</sup>

Another achievement of the Act concerned the rights of access to open country and footpaths. Local planning authorities were empowered to buy 'open country' compulsorily so that the public could enjoy open air recreation there. Local authorities were also required to do a complete survey of all the footpaths and bridleways in their areas, so that all public rights of way be recorded on maps and maintained permanently. Furthermore, the National

Parks Commission was responsible for introducing long-distance rights of way, which crossed the local boundaries. Dalton, now the Minister of Local Government and Housing, approved the first long distance right of way, the Pennine Way, in June 1951.<sup>57</sup>

### Arts patronage

State patronage of the arts after the war had widespread support across party lines. The establishment of the Arts Council of Great Britain was announced on 12th June, 1945, by Sir John Anderson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a National member of the caretaker Government.<sup>58</sup> This was probably a symbolic gesture promising a peaceful future. No debate occurred in Parliament, let alone any objections.

The Arts Council was an autonomous body, and Government responsibility was limited to deciding the amounts of annual grants on a Treasury vote. The detailed artistic policy of the Council and the actual allocation of its funds to various bodies were decided internally. The total amount of grants increased from £175,000 for 1944-45 to £575,000 for 1949-50, in addition to small supplementary grants.<sup>59</sup> Thereafter, the amount remained the same until Labour left office, despite rather drastic cuts made on other public spending. This was made possible largely by the efforts of Cripps who refused to make any reduction in cultural activities.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the Treasury gave an additional £400,000 for the Festival of Britain in 1951.<sup>61</sup>

The responsibility of the Arts Council was exclusively for 'fine arts': music, opera and ballet, drama and art.

Films, even 'art films', were not within the remit. John Maynard Keynes, the first chairman of the Council, summed up the policy line by declaring 'Death to Hollywood'.<sup>62</sup>

Initially, the Council tried to support various local arts' activities as much as possible. Many arts clubs, chamber concert societies, and industrial music clubs received both money and administrative help from the Council. In the sphere of drama, the establishment of regional theatres and companies was widely tried. However, they did not succeed in regenerating the degree of enthusiasm about the arts among the general public that had often been witnessed during the war. The Council reported in 1947 that 'the special wartime conditions which had led to the enthusiastic reception of canteen concerts had already disappeared and that entertainment during working hours was no longer wanted'.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, the Arts Council had another mission, to sustain and raise the standard of arts of national importance. Thus, the major institutions based in the metropolis claimed the larger amount of the Council's total expenditure. In the financial year 1950-51, the Covent Garden opera, Sadler's Wells ballet, Old Vic theatre and major symphony orchestras received more than three times as much public money as that spent on arts activities outside London.<sup>64</sup> In December 1949, the Select Committee on Estimates recommended that, having helped London they:

should now, however, turn their energies to making the Arts more widely accessible, being content at first, if necessary, with less ambitious standards, and Your Committee therefore suggest that the provinces, where the Arts are not so readily available to the public, provide a more

valuable field than the metropolitan area for the activities of the Council.<sup>65</sup>

However, by the time Labour left office, the Arts Council had opted to follow an opposite policy. It wanted to reduce its mission to bring the arts to the ordinary people in the provinces as much as possible. In 1951, the Council reported back that this 'further education' aspect of its work would not be beneficial, except in a few cases of outstanding quality:

Might it not be better to accept the realistic fact that the living theatre of good quality cannot be widely accessible and to concentrate our resources upon establishing a few more shrines like Stratford and the Bristol Old Vic? Is it good policy to encourage small, ill-equipped expeditions to set out into the wilderness and present meagre productions in village fit-ups?<sup>66</sup>

Thereafter, the Council was ever more busy trying to persuade local authorities to take responsibility for these 'further education' activities, by making use of the civic entertainments clause of the Local Government Act 1948.

### Civic entertainments

The civic entertainments clause caused a good deal of parliamentary debate when it was introduced by Aneurin Bevan, the Minister of Health. It gave local authorities power to undertake municipal enterprise for provision of entertainments. Local authorities other than parish and county councils were able to erect buildings suitable for entertainments; provide 'entertainment of any nature'; sell refreshments including intoxicating liquor; and spend up to

'a rate of six pence in the pound, plus the net amount of any receipts'.<sup>67</sup>

The clause was originally discussed by the Association of Municipal Corporations during the war.<sup>68</sup> The Association wrote to the Minister of Health in 1946 on possible legislation. At first, the reply was negative: 'the present pressure of Parliamentary works is such that it would not be practicable to introduce such legislation in the near future'.<sup>69</sup> Bevan, however, did not drop the question, but decided upon much wider powers than the Association had originally sought.<sup>70</sup> In 1948, when the new Local Government Bill was introduced, he brought in the civic entertainments clause at the last minute, surprising quite a few opposition members.<sup>71</sup> The debates on the clause at second reading revealed, in general, that Labour members had more modern, less snobbish and less puritanical views about people's social life than the Conservatives. There was particular prejudice against cinemas and dances. Attacking a Labour member who admired the Norwegian experiment of municipal cinema, the Tory Sidney Marshall stated that 'it is a very cheap and low form of appeal to be asked to run such entertainment for the masses'.<sup>72</sup> Conservative members were firmly against the idea of municipal entertainments: they did not like the idea that local authorities could provide or subsidise 'an entertainment of any nature'. The provision of entertainments, according to the Conservatives, was 'best provided by private enterprise', or 'better done by associations of public-minded citizens'.<sup>73</sup> They also regarded the expenditure limit of a sixpenny rate as an

extravagance. On all these points, similar but separate amendments were repeatedly put by the Conservatives.

Although there were several previous pieces of legislation which allowed local authorities to provide entertainments in civic buildings, or to provide recreational facilities such as public parks and pleasure grounds,<sup>74</sup> they were piecemeal and more restrictive in nature, rather than directly encouraging. If local authorities had needed wider powers to undertake civic entertainment enterprises, as in the case of authorities in seaside resorts, they had to obtain Private Acts separately. In principle, the new clause set a framework in which local authorities could positively develop cultural and leisure policy, in a comprehensive way.

In his introductory speech to the third reading of the Local Government Bill, Bevan mentioned the civic entertainments' clause. He declared that the new clause would modernise and rejuvenate the 'whole character of the local government'.<sup>75</sup> This echoed an opinion later expressed in one of Bevan's books. There, he wrote that, when he had pressed forward with the civic entertainments legislation, he had 'the dilemma of the artist during the transition stage in society very much in mind'.<sup>76</sup> He wanted to help the artist in an age of declining private patronage. He hoped, by this small measure, that they would find a new role which would be to serve the community.

### Entertainments tax

The first entertainments tax in Britain was introduced, in 1916, as a war emergency measure. It was, however, never revoked after the end of the First World War. In 1935, a new reduced scale was introduced, which favoured stage plays, ballet, music, lectures, recitations, music hall and variety, circus and travelling shows, on the grounds that living performances were fighting a losing battle against the cinema. During the Second World War, most rates of entertainments duty went up considerably. The Government revenue from this tax increased from a mere £8 million in 1938 to over a £51 million in 1946.<sup>77</sup> Among the entertainments industries which were required to pay this duty, the cinema was by far the largest contributor. In the post-war 1940s, about 80 per cent of the Exchequer's annual revenue from the entertainments duty came from the cinema. When the war was over, the cinema exhibitors were paying the tax at full rates, along with sports and games entrepreneurs.

Against the background of a near-bankrupt national economy and the continuing popularity of public entertainment of every kind, the Government did not want to reduce the rates of entertainments duty, let alone abolish it. However, Labour succeeded in introducing a series of modest measures to relax the burden. The first of these was introduced in the 1946 Budget.<sup>78</sup> Hugh Dalton proposed that the full-rate duty, hitherto applied to football, cricket, boxing, tennis, swimming, athletics and all other outdoor sports, as well as indoor games such as billiards and chess, should be replaced by reduced rates. The full-rate duty was



to continue to apply only to horse, motor and dog racing, and the cinema.

Although the reduced tax on sports and games was firstly proposed and advocated by Conservative members in the November 1945 Finance Bill debate, it was rejected by the Government at that time.<sup>79</sup> However, Dalton was willing to make these concessions as soon as possible. Before his Budget speech in November 1945, he made it clear that he would include amendments the following year.<sup>80</sup> The concession was particularly aimed at relieving the financial burden on professional football clubs.<sup>81</sup> The game undoubtedly benefited from this concession: it reduced the average incidence of duty on football from 30 per cent to 17 per cent.<sup>82</sup>

Apart from this concession, however, the post-war Labour Government did not involve itself much in the world of sports. When the 1948 Olympic Games was held in London, the Government provided no financial support, other than a few limited measures to relax food rationing for competitors and help with the construction of accommodation.<sup>83</sup> The granting of expenses for sending British teams to overseas gymnastic and sporting events was also refused by the Treasury.<sup>84</sup> When Philip Noel-Baker, then the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations with a seat in the Cabinet, asked the Treasury to look into possible public support for the Empire Games in 1951, he also proposed a scheme to modernise sports facilities in the country, using a Treasury grant of £1 million over four years.<sup>85</sup> The Treasury, however, refused on financial grounds. A suggestion to

appoint a Minister of Sport made in the House of Commons was rejected by the Prime Minister.<sup>86</sup>

Sir Stafford Cripps, who took over from Dalton in 1947, also relaxed the policy on entertainments duty. In his first Budget speech, Cripps proposed halving the tax on theatres, music concerts, sports and other live entertainments by exempting payment on admissions up to one shilling.<sup>87</sup> This reduction should be seen as a positive response to the demand expressed at the preceding British Theatre Conference, which Cripps himself had addressed.<sup>88</sup> Cripps had a personal interest in the theatre.<sup>89</sup> During his Chancellorship, he was the architect of the National Theatre Act in 1949, by which the Government could contribute £1 million towards the cost of the new national theatre. Oliver Lyttleton, speaking for the Opposition, congratulated the Government on their 'great boldness and imagination', and the Act had almost unanimous support.<sup>90</sup> Cripps also sympathetically received repeated requests from the Trade Union Congress to establish a Working Party to enquire into the theatre industry, and particularly its monopolistic tendency. He tried to persuade the Arts Council, the official organisation responsible for sponsoring drama, to establish the Working Party, but the Chairman's repeated refusal made this impossible.<sup>91</sup>

In 1949, Cripps made a further exemption from the entertainment duty for amateur societies giving dramatic, balletic, musical or other live performances.<sup>92</sup> The Financial Secretary to the Treasury was also willing to incorporate the amendment put forward by a Conservative

member which aimed to change the classification of the scale of the full-rate entertainments duty, particularly as it related to the cinema. The new classification aimed to enable cinema exhibitors to provide more popularly priced seats.<sup>93</sup> In 1950, Cripps proposed a small concession over the full-rates entertainments duty, with a view to helping struggling independent film producers as well as smaller cinema exhibitors.<sup>94</sup> This concession included a clause under which cinema exhibitors would hand over a part of increased revenue to a central pool, from which the producers would be subsidized.

### Film industry

As we have seen, the Labour Government made several minor concessions to the cinema industry as far as the entertainments duty was concerned. Then, in April 1951, Hugh Gaitskell, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, increased the duty for the first time since 1943. By that time, the Labour Government was committed to the rearmament programme provoked by the Korean War.<sup>95</sup> However, he was ready to consult all sides of the film industry, including the trade unions, about the details of the increase before the final stage of the Finance Bill.<sup>96</sup> After the consultation, he presented a modified proposal which was supported by all sides of the industry.<sup>97</sup>

What else did Labour do to or for the film industry? The Government's involvement had started well before the Second World War.<sup>98</sup> During the war, Hugh Dalton, then at the Board of Trade, published an official report on monopoly

in the British film industry.<sup>99</sup> Immediately after the war, Cripps' plans for state support of independent film makers were lost in the wider legislation programme. When Cripps finally submitted his plan, which was to replace the old Cinematograph Films Act of 1938, to the Lord President's Committee in 1947, Dalton, now the Chancellor of the Exchequer, refused to provide public money for the establishment of a finance corporation to assist the independent producer.<sup>100</sup> Cripps was a man of left-wing culture who favoured artistic and educational films, as well as documentary films, made by independent producers, while Dalton was allegedly converted in wartime to the idea that only big film companies would play a useful part in the British film industry.<sup>101</sup> Dalton also made no distinction in his approach to films, and was firmly in favour of popular Hollywood films.<sup>102</sup>

It was Dalton, ironically, who had to introduce a measure to cut the number of imported American films in order to save dollars. Under the deepening crisis of sterling convertibility, Dalton firstly acquired power to impose heavy import duties on films in July 1947.<sup>103</sup> Then, in August, he exercised the power by imposing a 75 per cent levy on all imported films. This measure was part of wider restrictions on the importation of goods such as petrol and tobacco. The object was to save dollars,<sup>104</sup> and not to boost revenue nor protect the British film industry.<sup>105</sup> The American film industry immediately retaliated, stopping all shipments of American films to Britain. As well over 70 per cent of British performance had been dominated by imported

films since before the war,<sup>106</sup> what the British cinema exhibitors actually did was to fill their screens with American films already in Britain.

It has been argued by some film historians that this Dalton duty was 'ill-thought-out',<sup>107</sup> or a 'colossal misjudgement',<sup>108</sup>, suggesting that the duty did not make sense in either cultural or economic policy terms.<sup>109</sup> But as the following simple table shows, the duty did actually save dollars, if not as many as was hoped.

Table 2:1 Annual film remittances from U.K. to U.S.A., 1939-1949.<sup>110</sup>

year ending October	net amount paid in £ million	remittance to foreign films
1939	7.0	unrestricted
40	4.8	restricted
41	5.7	restricted
42	8.5	restricted
43	26.5	unrestricted
44	15.6	unrestricted
45	17.0	unrestricted
46	18.1	unrestricted
<u>year (January-December)</u>		
1946	17	unrestricted
47	14	Dalton duty from August
48	10	restricted from June
49	6	restricted

Moreover, Parliamentary members of both parties overwhelmingly supported the Dalton duty.<sup>111</sup> The restriction on the importation of American films was originally demanded by a Conservative member, with a famous 'bacon before Bogart' slogan.<sup>112</sup> Harold Macmillan claimed that Britain had 'frittered away £34 million worth of

dollars in the last two years',<sup>113</sup> and wanted a severe restriction on imported films. When the Dalton duty was announced by the Prime Minister, general cheers erupted in the House of Commons.<sup>114</sup> Even the most consistent and stern opponent of the Dalton duty, a Labour member who was familiar with the cinema industry, admitted that it was inevitable.<sup>115</sup>

Not only Parliament, but also public opinion was in favour of the Government's policy. In addition to the fact that the press was generally in favour of the Dalton tax, opinion polls firmly backed the cut in imported films. A newspaper poll conducted at the beginning of 1946 revealed that eight out of ten supported the 'Food before Films' policy, and another poll conducted by the *News Chronicle* in October 1947 showed that 58 per cent supported the continuation of the Dalton duty, against 24 per cent who favoured its removal.<sup>116</sup>

However, it is true that the Dalton duty could not fulfil its initial object, which was to reduce the dollar drain to £4.25 million a year. Although the duty saved dollars, the re-issue of American films already in Britain was costing about £12.5 million per year remittance to the United States in early 1948.<sup>117</sup> In addition to this, the Labour Government was anxious to avoid any unnecessary diplomatic trouble with the United States. The Government was also well aware that the prolonged absence of new American films, if it continued for more than a year, would damage cinema exhibitors.<sup>118</sup> The Government, therefore, was ready to abandon the Dalton duty if a reasonable alternative

measure could be found.<sup>119</sup> It was ended in June 1948, after Harold Wilson, newly appointed President of the Board of Trade, secured an alternative agreement from the American film industry in March of that year, which limited the annual amount of net remittance to the United States to £4.25 million a year.<sup>120</sup> Some of the British press again was in favour of the new agreement on the grounds that it was a 'sensible compromise',<sup>121</sup> 'a realistic compromise',<sup>122</sup> or even 'a thoroughly good bargain'.<sup>123</sup> The newspapers which were critical of Wilson thought the agreement was not tough enough on the Americans.<sup>124</sup>

Labour undertook several measures to support the British film industry in a more positive way. Wilson, following his predecessor Cripps, was anxious to increase the productivity of the British film industry, particularly that of independent producers.<sup>125</sup> He set up a joint production council in 1948, the National Film Production Council, constituted of producers and employees, to increase efficiency in production. Under the Cinematograph Films Act, 1948, Wilson also inaugurated a Selection Committee, which aimed to prevent independent films from being excluded unfairly from big circuits. However, neither body did much to improve the position of independent producers and the British film industry in general. Wilson also tried a more protective measure. Immediately after the Dalton duty was lifted in June 1948, Wilson raised the quota of British first feature films to be screened from 20 per cent to 45 per cent,<sup>126</sup> but the low rate of British film production could not fulfil this quota.<sup>127</sup>

More aggressively, in July 1948, Wilson announced the setting up of the National Film Finance Corporation with £5 millions of public money to finance independent producers via low interest loans. This became possible against the wishes of Treasury officials, only after Cripps' personal intervention.<sup>128</sup> The Corporation was projected as a temporary measure lasting for just five years in order to facilitate the post-war recovery of the industry.<sup>129</sup>

Wilson also launched a series of detailed inquiries, aimed at encouraging a more fundamental modernisation of the British film industry. First, he appointed a committee (the Gater Committee) to enquire into the desirability of a state owned studio, which might be set aside for independent producers. The resulting report found that there was no shortage of film studios in Britain, but a lack of finance made independent producers unable to use them. Wilson then set up a Working Party on Film Production Costs in late 1948, which found that there was inefficiency as well as extravagance in the industry. Its report, however, also pointed out that there was a considerable gap between production costs and producers' earnings from the distributors and exhibitors.<sup>130</sup> Accordingly, Wilson appointed another committee (the Plant Committee) to examine the revenue side. The report published in November 1949 concluded, firstly, that it was necessary to re-organise both the film distribution and exhibition trades. It stated that the trades had been organised unfairly in favour of the major circuits, thus restricting the return from the box-office nationally. Secondly, it also concluded that



producers tended to be subordinated to the distributors in several ways, which explained the poor financial condition of the independent producers. Finally, as a general conclusion, the report pointed out that the entertainments duty was 'so high as to constitute a serious handicap to British production'.<sup>131</sup> Overall, these official reports revealed the enormous amount of difficulties and obstacles which stood in the way of modernising the British film industry. Wilson became increasingly aware that a more radical restructuring of the industry was necessary. He especially wanted to restrict its monopolistic tendency by creating a separate national circuit which would show the films of independent producers.<sup>132</sup> However, there was not enough time, and the idea remained in abeyance during Labour's remaining time in office.

### Broadcasting

There was another popular medium which was literally a monopoly, but which the Labour Government consistently defended: the British Broadcasting Corporation. As with other social issues, the planning of broadcasting was given a good deal of attention by the wartime Government as an indispensable part of the post-war world. An official committee was set up in 1943 to investigate the post-war development of television, which had been suspended since the war broke out. In January 1944, a War Cabinet Committee was appointed to consider post-war broadcasting policy.<sup>133</sup> The Labour Government accepted the main arguments of the Committee. The White Paper on post-war broadcasting policy

concluded that the monopoly of the BBC should be secured for a further five years, without any official investigation; advertising and sponsored programmes should be ruled out; and the idea of regional devolution was welcomed.<sup>134</sup> These conclusions essentially related to sound broadcasting, and meant no more than the restoration of pre-war arrangements. The parliamentary debates on the White Paper demonstrated that there was a broad consensus which opposed sponsored programmes or commercial stations.<sup>135</sup>

The Government appointed a Broadcasting Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Beveridge in 1949, in preparation for the expiry of the current BBC Charter and License in 1952. The other Beveridge Report was published in January 1951, followed by a Government memorandum on the Report in July.<sup>136</sup> Both maintained the view that the BBC monopoly should remain. Throughout its period in office Labour felt the BBC was best. However, there was a significant shift in the Conservative Party on broadcasting policy in 1951. A small Conservative Broadcasting Policy Committee was set up just after the publication of the Beveridge Report, and published its own report just before the Government memorandum appeared.<sup>137</sup> A speech made by W. S. Morrison during the Parliamentary debate of 1951 reflected that report and emphasised that many Conservative members did not accept 'the issue of monopoly as finally closed one way or another', suggesting the possibility of introducing sponsored programmes on the BBC, 'either on sound or television or both'.<sup>138</sup> As Asa Briggs rightly observed, the Beveridge Report on broadcasting 'settled precisely

nothing',<sup>139</sup> which was a sharp contrast to his earlier Report on social services. After the Conservatives took office in October 1951, the question of monopoly became a fierce political issue, as we will see in the following chapter.

### Holidays

Along with the film industry, there was one other leisure industry which faced financial difficulties: the catering, tourist and holiday industry. This industry was composed of several different sections, whose size, quality of service and character of customer were immensely different. Thus, there was no unified interest representing the industry as a whole. Nevertheless, towards the end of the war, future rehabilitation of the industry became an issue to which the Government paid considerable attention. The Government was mainly concerned with three different aspects of this industry: the rehabilitation of the catering industry in general; the improvement of tourist services for foreign visitors; and better summer holiday provision for British workers and their families.

The Catering Commission, which was established in 1943 by Ernest Bevin for the purpose of regulating and improving catering working conditions, submitted its report on the post-war reconstruction of the industry at the end of 1944.<sup>140</sup> It recommended early derequisitioning of catering premises, and further suggested the setting up of a rehabilitation fund in order to ease the financial difficulties of the industry. This fund would have been

financed not by the government, but by a 'sleeper tax' paid by customers.<sup>141</sup> However, there was a widespread lack of interest, in addition to sectional opposition to the proposal,<sup>142</sup> and so it was quietly abandoned.

Secondly, the Commission recommended establishing a statutory body, the National Travel, Holiday and Catering Board, which would improve and develop the industry as a whole.<sup>143</sup> After receiving this recommendation, the Prime Minister announced that the Board of Trade would take all responsibility from the other government departments for the industry.<sup>144</sup> Then, in December 1946, it was announced that the British Tourist and Holiday Board was to be set up as an incorporated body.<sup>145</sup> The Board was to consist of four divisions, responsible for overseas tourists, hotels, catering and home holidays. The Travel Association, which had been created in 1929, for the purpose of attracting foreign visitors to Britain, was in effect to become the tourist division of the Board.

Because of the acute shortage of dollars at this time, overriding attention was paid to the tourist division. Foreign tourist expenditure in Britain, particularly if it came from the United States, was an important invisible export earning. Putting aside the fact that much more money tended to be spent by British tourists abroad than was spent here by visitors,<sup>146</sup> the trade earned more money than many other British export industries.<sup>147</sup> In 1948, its earnings exceeded those of cotton and whisky.<sup>148</sup> Thus, more than three quarters of the Board's total expenditure was spent by the tourist division.<sup>149</sup> With a view to achieving economy

and efficiency, the Board was finally replaced by the British Travel and Holiday Association, whose concern was just overseas visitors and home holiday makers.<sup>150</sup> The Labour Government provided several incentives to attract foreign visitors. There was, for example, a special relaxation of the petrol ration and the amount of duty-free goods available to tourists, as well as a special supply of soap. To improve the facilities for the reception of visitors, Harold Wilson appointed a Working Party on Passenger Handling Facilities in 1948.<sup>151</sup> In the same year, the amount of foreign currency earned by the tourist industry finally exceeded the pre-war figure.<sup>152</sup>

The problems which the seaside resort industry was facing in the post-war period were equally serious. The main customers were British holiday makers not overseas visitors. During the war, it was widely forecast that post-war demands for holidays away from home would far exceed pre-war experiences.<sup>153</sup> Various reasons were adduced for the increase in demand. By 1945, holidays with pay were available to 14 million people, about 80 per cent of all insured workers, compared with a mere four million in 1937.<sup>154</sup> The National Council of Social Service estimated that some 30 million people would take a holiday away from home in the post-war period, while in 1937 the figure was 15 million.<sup>155</sup> Secondly, full employment, higher earnings, compulsory and voluntary war savings, and gratuities given to demobbed soldiers, all brought in more money to people who could not afford a holiday before the war. Thirdly, it

was assumed that many people desperately wanted to have a change after six years of stressful life during the war.

The Catering Wages Commission, which was a government body, felt that the staggering of holidays should be introduced.<sup>156</sup> British people preferred to take their annual summer holidays in late July and early August, especially the first week preceding August Bank Holiday. However, the Commission opposed any compulsory measures for staggering, and recommended a voluntary scheme, though it also recommended other direct actions, including the introduction of a movable date for the August Bank Holiday, and the transferring of school examination dates. But its main recommendation was for the establishment of a three-tier organisation (consisting of a central body, regional committees and town committees) to publicise and facilitate voluntary spread-over schemes. The Government, in general, accepted the recommendation. The Ministry of Labour appointed a national Standing Committee,<sup>157</sup> the regional officers of the Ministry of Labour were allocated to work as a organisers for regional and local conferences on the subject and a national propaganda campaign was organised.<sup>158</sup> It was largely a failure. In December 1947, the Commission reported that:

Judging by the experience of holiday resorts and of the railways, it seems that, despite an intensive publicity campaign, a large section of the public remains unshaken in its belief that the second half of July and the first half of the August is the proper time in which to take a holiday, no matter what the cost in money, inconvenience and positive discomfort to itself.<sup>159</sup>

Further disappointment came in the following year.<sup>160</sup> The Government made it clear that the suggested change of the date for the August Bank Holiday divided public opinion, and thus no further action would be taken.<sup>161</sup> In the 1950s, the question of staggered holidays was dropped by the Catering Wages Commission.

Another concern regarding home holiday makers was the provision of holiday accommodation for the lower income working-class family. Following a recommendation made by the Commission<sup>162</sup>, official social surveys were conducted, in order to assess precise needs.<sup>163</sup> The first survey found not only that the lower-paid family was often unable to find reasonable holiday accommodation, but that the more children the family had, the less it could afford a holiday away from home.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, the Royal Commission on Population suggested in 1949 that the state support cheap family holidays, as a part of a wider population policy.<sup>165</sup> In the same year, the Labour Party promised that it would establish a holiday council with government support, in order to provide 'modern reasonably priced holiday centres with accommodation for families'.<sup>166</sup> Labour members raised this question in the House of Commons in 1950.<sup>167</sup> Conservatives saw this move as another attempt at nationalisation. After a half day of discussion, the question was put, but could not attract enough support. The question was never raised again during Labour's period in office.

### Gambling

There were two main issues related to gambling. The first one concerned the dog racing ban imposed during the serious fuel crisis in the winter of 1946-47. The second was related to the Labour's introduction of a betting duty. During the peak of the fuel crisis, in order to save electricity, every greyhound racing track in the country was prohibited from using any kind of fuel.<sup>168</sup> The effect was to close down racing. There were, of course, other casualties: electricity supply to non-essential industries was also cut entirely in many areas; domestic consumption was cut by five hours a day; the BBC Third Programme and the television service were completely suspended for more than two weeks; and the publication of all periodicals was banned for two weeks.<sup>169</sup>

As these restrictions were gradually relaxed, Shinwell, Minister of Fuel and Power, proposed to exempt dog tracks since these were not large consumers of electricity and the worst of the crisis was over.<sup>170</sup> However, since before the fuel crisis, the Official Steering Committee on Economic Development had been investigating whether mid-week sporting events interfered with production, and its report was expected to appear shortly.<sup>171</sup> Consequently, it was decided that the existing Order should be maintained for a while.<sup>172</sup> Then the Steering Committee reported that there was 'evidence that in coal mining and other industries considerable dislocation and loss of production are caused by mid-week events, mainly football matches'.<sup>173</sup> The Government recognised that the high absenteeism among coal miners at this time<sup>174</sup> could not be attributed to mid-week greyhound meetings.<sup>175</sup> However, it felt that it could not



relax the ban on one type of popular sport, while asking for restrictions on another. The Cabinet agreed to restrict all major mid-week sports which might attract large number of industrial workers.

Shinwell issued an amending Order that dog racing could be held but only on Saturdays and four statutory holidays. At the same time, J. Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary, announced that most other spectator sports were also confined to Saturdays for an indefinite period.<sup>176</sup> The opposition spokesman, Anthony Eden, agreed that suspending mid-week sports was 'rather necessary though most unpalatable'.<sup>177</sup> All mid-week sport except dog racing was suspended on a voluntary basis. The Government introduced a temporary bill specially to regulate the dogs, the Dog Racing Betting (Temporary Provisions) Bill 1947. This was necessary to enable two dog race meetings to be held on a Saturday.<sup>178</sup> The bill would remove the disadvantages which greyhound enthusiasts would suffer compared to those who enjoyed other sports. The Government even made a further concession, which enabled the promoters of greyhound racing to obtain special sanction from the Secretary of State to hold mid-week races.<sup>179</sup>

At the end of 1947, the Home Secretary felt that he could not maintain restrictions for another year, without firm evidence which would show the positive relationship between absenteeism and mid-week sporting events.<sup>180</sup> Although conclusive statistics were never produced, a meeting of the Divisional Chairman of the National Coal Board unanimously agreed that a revival of mid-week sports

would disturb output.<sup>181</sup> The Minister also feared that any discontinuance of the ban might be interpreted as encouraging a relaxation in the battle for increased production. The Cabinet agreed that the restrictions should be retained in 1948.<sup>182</sup> The only restriction on sport relaxed by the Government in 1948 was that on special trains to sporting events.<sup>183</sup> The temporary legislation on dog racing was drafted to expire in June 1948. In March, Ede announced that the Government would allow one mid-week meeting per track after that date, provided that the mid-week meetings in neighbouring regions were 'held on the same day so as to exclude travelling from one track to another'.<sup>184</sup> This restriction was finally removed a year later.

It may be argued that the prohibition on mid-week sports was a rather hurried decision,<sup>185</sup> though it is wrong to assume that behind it was strong moral prejudice among Government ministers and officials against dog racing, gambling, or sports in general.<sup>186</sup> The Government was certainly concerned with the morale of production workers. However, there was no moral discussion among Ministers or officials. The Government approached this question solely from the production point of view.

In the immediate post-war period, the popularity of football pools betting increased substantially. Despite the severe restriction on paper supply for football coupons, the weekly estimate of coupons completed rose from 1.5 million in 1945 to 7.5 million in 1948.<sup>187</sup> Under the severe

economic constraints, the Labour Government was certainly anxious to impose a betting duty to raise public revenue. However, a similar attempt had failed before the war, because of the administrative difficulties of collecting the duty from the bookmakers. In his spring Budget proposal of 1947, Dalton explained that it was not difficult to tax the totalisators at horse and dog tracks, as well as the football pools. However, he continued, it would be an unfair tax if bookmakers were exempt.<sup>188</sup>

Experiencing the double crises of fuel and dollar, however, the Chancellor changed his mind: his worries about fairness gave way to a desperate need to increase public revenue wherever possible. In the autumn Budget of the same year, therefore, Dalton proposed a 10 per cent betting duty on the totalisators at the dogs and on football pools, with a view to collecting £15 million in new revenue.<sup>189</sup> Because Dalton exempted the horse racing totalisator, it has been suggested that the Labour Government regarded the dogs as 'unfavourable'.<sup>190</sup> However, it should be emphasised that the main reason for this discrimination was not moral but technical and economic: the Racecourse Betting Control Board, which ran the totalisators at horse racing tracks, was a government regulated non-profit making body, while dog tracks were for private profit.<sup>191</sup>

As to the bookmakers, Sir Stafford Cripps, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, promised to investigate if the Government could tax them. The debates on this new betting duty well reflected the changed perception about the status of betting in British society. Apart from a Roman Catholic

Labour Member,<sup>192</sup> no one spoke against the principle of a tax on betting. The criticism made was that the tax had not gone far enough.<sup>193</sup> Betting in general was no longer dismissed as a social vice, but was accepted as a proper source for public revenue.

Cripps certainly kept his promise. In the following year, he introduced another new tax, the bookmakers' licence duty, for bookmakers operating on dog racing courses.<sup>194</sup> He also raised the rate of football pool betting duty to 20 per cent. This was raised again in 1949 by another 10 per cent. The Government also inaugurated the Royal Commission on Betting in 1949, in order to regulate and tax the betting industry more comprehensively. The Commission's Report was published in March 1951, just before the Labour Government left office.<sup>195</sup>

The post-war Labour Government and the overwhelming majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party accepted that betting was a part of national life in Britain. It is true that in the severe economic circumstances of the time, some members, Labour and Conservative, urged the Government to take more control of some aspects of the betting industry, such as manpower and paper allocation. However, when these arguments were actually put before the House, the Government always firmly rejected any moral suggestion that betting was a social evil.<sup>196</sup>

### Enjoyment of leisure

As seen in this chapter, many Labour politicians were interested in the arts, sports and recreation, although

their interests varied. The Labour Government succeeded in passing several pieces of legislation related to leisure, many of which had a long term perspective. The Labour Party research department prepared a draft in 1947, which tried to review what had been achieved and what remained to be done as a national policy for leisure. The draft reflected a modernised and less elitist view of leisure, declaring that leisure policy should be considered solely from the standpoint of what would contribute to greater enjoyment.<sup>197</sup> In early 1948, Cripps instructed his officials to review the government's whole stance on leisure. A Treasury official noted that Cripps's intention was:

that under modern conditions we ought to be making, and could afford to make, a larger provision than we are making at present towards this part of life, and he said that he would very much like to have it accepted as part of general Government policy that the enjoyment of leisure should claim a bigger proportion of the total expenditure on the Budget.<sup>198</sup>

As we have seen, however, this was never realised, mainly because of the difficult national economic situation and the other massive legislation programmes, as well as strong doubts among civil servants about the merits of the state involvement in people's spare time.<sup>199</sup> Labour's Festival of Britain was over. The Conservative Government at first decided to keep the Festival Garden open in order to recoup the £1 million loss made by the event.<sup>200</sup> However, the level of attendance proved to be well below what was profitable, and in 1953 it was decided to close it.<sup>201</sup>

## Notes to Chapter 2

- 1 *HC Debs*, vol. 423, col. WA300, 4 June 1946.
- 2 *HC Debs*, vol. 419, col. 1548, 25 February 1946.
- 3 The Select Committee on Estimates, Session 1946-47, *Minutes of Evidence Taken before Sub-Committee D*, 'Statement A: number of properties held on requisition by Government Departments on the 1st January, 1945, and the 31st December, 1946'.
- 4 *HC Debs*, vol. 433, col. WA239, 24 February 1947.
- 5 Catering Wages Commission, *Fourth Annual Report, 1946-1947* (1947), p. 6.
- 6 R. H. Best and J. T. Coppock, *The Changing Use of Land in Britain* (1962), p. 188.
- 7 *HC Debs*, vol. 441, col. 1505, 6 August 1947.
- 8 This announcement was not made in Parliament but through the BBC, on 27 August 1947. Interestingly, petrol for church-going was granted, while that for shopping was not permitted. See, *The Economist*, 8 November 1947, p. 754.
- 9 *The Economist*, 30 August 1947, pp. 352-53. This was restored the following March. See, also another issue, 26 March 1948, p. 451.
- 10 *HC Debs*, vol. 449, cols. 369-370, 8 April 1948.
- 11 For the economic background to the end of petrol rationing, see a leading article in *The Economist*, 3 June 1950, pp. 1201-02.
- 12 *HC Debs*, vol. 410, cols. 2665-66, 17 May 1945; 3 December 1945, vol. 416, col. 1898; vol. 421, col. 2329, 15 April 1946; vol. 427, col. WA374, 23 October 1946.
- 13 *Board of Trade Journal*, 11 December 1948, p. 1112.
- 14 *Board of Trade Journal*, 5 June 1948, p. 1093.
- 15 *Board of Trade Journal*, 26 March 1949, pp. 632-33.
- 16 *Board of Trade Journal*, 18 February 1950, p. 343.
- 17 *Brewers' Almanack 1966* (1966), p. 46.
- 18 Mass-Observation Archive, File Report 3029, 'A Report on Drinking Habits', August 1948, pp. 272-83.
- 19 See, J. Vaizey, *The Brewing Industry 1886-1951* (1960), p. 47.
- 20 *HC Debs*, vol. 474, col. 71, 18 April 1950. Cripps estimated that he would lose more than £3 million revenue by this measure in a full year.
- 21 *HC Debs*, vol. 422, col. 157, 30 April 1946. ENSA put on over one million performances during the war for more than 318 million troops and factory workers. See the statement made by H. Morrison in the House of Commons on 1st November 1945: *HC Debs*, vol. 415, col. 615.
- 22 Among the organisations, the National War Workers' Clubs' Committee of the National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs was prominent.
- 23 *HC Debs*, vol. 416, cols. WA740-41, 22 November 1945; vol. 419, cols. WA260-61, 20 February 1946.
- 24 PRO, ED 169/24, letter, Caroline Haslett and Katherine Elliot, to Ellen Wilkinson, Minister of Education, 5 October 1945. On the wartime activities of the clubs,

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- see, M. Nicholson, *Clubs for Citizens: A Wartime Experiment* (1945).
- 25 PRO, ED 169/24, note of interview with representatives of various national voluntary organisations, 5 November 1945; memorandum, sent to local education authorities, 15 March 1946.
- 26 See, MoE, *Community Centres* (1945). See also a letter to Wartime Housing Ltd., Toronto, Canada, 3 April 1947, in PRO, ED 169/24.
- 27 See, for example, PEP, 'Space for Leisure', *Planning*, no. 207 (June 1943); PEP, 'Clubs, Societies and Democracy', *Planning*, no. 263 (March 1947); Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Leisure 1940-47, Box 1 File A, various reports and comments on leisure, 9 September 1942.
- 28 MoE, *The Purpose and Content of the Youth Service: A Report of the Youth Advisory Council appointed by the Minister of Education in 1943* (1945). This can be considered as a sister pamphlet to *Community Centres* (1944).
- 29 Section 41 of the Education Act, 1944.
- 30 Section 4 of the Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937.
- 31 The Ministry might give grants under the Social and Physical Training Grant Regulation, 1939, for capital expenditure, training of leaders and headquarters' administration of youth organisations; and under the Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937, for sports organisations, village halls and community centres.
- 32 PRO, ED 169/24, a note of discussion held on 29 October 1946 on 'the subject of priority for schemes for the provision of facilities for recreation and social and physical training for adults and young people'.
- 33 PRO, ED 169/24, an internal note from M. Davies to Mr Bray, 11 November 1946.
- 34 MoE, Circular 155, 'The Educational Building Programmes 1947-1949', 1 December 1947.
- 35 MoE, Circular 209, 'Capital Investment in 1950', 28 October 1949.
- 36 MoE, Circular 210, 'Expenditure of Local Education Authorities', 28 October 1949.
- 37 PRO, ED 169/26, a memorandum written by F. S. Millingan, secretary of the National Federation of Community Associations [February 1952].
- 38 The National Playing Fields Association, *Annual Report 1946-47*, p. 17.
- 39 The National Playing Fields Association, *Annual Report 1949*, p. 22; *Annual Report 1950*, p. 17.
- 40 See, Appendix 3 in Cmnd. 929, *The Youth Service in England and Wales* (1960).
- 41 Cmnd. 929, *The Youth Service in England and Wales* (1960), p. 5.
- 42 The Labour Party, *Local Government Handbook 1951-52, England and Wales* (1951), p. 183.
- 43 See, J. B. Cullingworth, *Town and Country Planning in England and Wales* (1964), Chapter 1.

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- 44 For a detailed account of the development of post-war planning policy during the war, see, J. B. Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning 1939-1969*, vol. I: *Reconstruction and Land Use Planning 1939-47* (1975), and G. E. Cherry, *Environmental Planning 1939-1969*, vol. II: *National Parks and Recreation in the Countryside* (1975). See also, J. Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre* (Buckingham, 1992), Chapter 2.
- 45 In his memorandum presented to the War Cabinet in December 1940, Sir John Reith, Minister of Works and Building, stated that the amenity questions were to be an essential part of post-war planning policy. See, Cullingworth, *Environmental Planning* (1975), p. 54. Arthur Greenwood, the Labour chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Problems, included 'facilities for enjoyment of leisure' in his shopping list of the long-term domestic social problems which should be tackled after the war. See, P. Addison, *The Road to 1945* (1977), p. 167.
- 46 Cmd. 6378, *Report of the Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas* (1942); Cmd. 6537, *The Control of Land Use* (1944).
- 47 Piecemeal powers to purchase land for amenity purposes had already been given, for example, in the Public Health Act 1925.
- 48 Cmd. 8204, *Town and Country Planning 1943-1951* (1951), pp. 26-27.
- 49 In a memorandum to the Lord President's Committee in August 1945, he wrote that the creation of National Parks 'to which the public should have proper access, and where accommodation at a low cost should be provided, should be given a relatively high place in our programme'. This was quoted in Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), p. 50.
- 50 Cmd. 7121, *Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales)* (1947) and Cmd. 7207, *Footpaths and Access to the Countryside, Report of the Special Committee* (1947).
- 51 On the various difficulties which Silkin faced within the Government in drafting the Bill, see, Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), Chapter 5.
- 52 Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), pp. 100 and 101.
- 53 This was Section 56 of the Finance Act, 1910. However, since this arrangement had been made, only two bodies had taken advantage of the provision. See Dalton's statement in *HC Debs*, vol. 421, col. 1838, 9 April 1946.
- 54 See, *HC Debs*, vol. 421, col. 1839, 9 April 1946.
- 55 *HC Debs*, vol. 421, col. 2837, 9 April 1946.
- 56 *Second Report of the National Parks Commission for the year ending 30th September, 1951* (1951), p. 1.
- 57 *Second Report of the National Parks Commission* (1951), p. 3.
- 58 *HC Debs*, vol. 411, cols. WA1482-83. In his announcement, Sir John stated that 'The present Council [of Encouragement of Arts and Music] was set up to maintain the standard and the national tradition of the



- arts under war conditions. The experience thus gained seemed to us to show that there will be a lasting need after the war for a body of this kind to encourage knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts in the broad sense of that term'.
- 59 *Nineteenth Report from the Select Committee on Estimates, Session 1948-49, 'The Arts Council of Great Britain' (1949), p. ix.*
- 60 PRO, T 227/61, note on meeting between Cripps and a deputation from the Arts and Amenities Group of the Parliamentary Labour Party, 24 November 1949.
- 61 The Arts Council, *Sixth Annual Report 1950-51 (1951)*, p. 37; *Seventh Annual Report 1951-1952 (1952)*, p. 51.
- 62 Arts Council, *The First Annual Report 1945-6 (1946)*, p. 23.
- 63 The Arts Council, *Second Annual Report 1946-47 (1947)*, p. 13.
- 64 The Arts Council, *Sixth Annual Report (1951)*, p. 33.
- 65 *Nineteenth Report from the Select Committee on Estimates (1949)*, p. xv.
- 66 The Arts Council, *Sixth Annual Report (1951)*, pp. 33-34.
- 67 Entertainments Clause of the Local Government Bill, reprinted in the *HC Debs*, vol. 447, cols. 1343-46.
- 68 In January 1945, a sub-committee of the Association resolved that augmentation of local authorities' powers to provide music and arts was desirable: PRO, PRO 30/72/78, Association of Municipal Corporations, Minutes of Law Committee, 11 January 1945.
- 69 PRO, PRO 30/72/79, letter from A. M. Legge, Ministry of Health, to the Association, cited in the minutes of the General Purpose Committee, 7 March 1946.
- 70 For example, the Association asked for a twopenny rate as the limit of expenditure. See, PRO, PRO 30/72/79, Minutes of Annual Meeting, 23 May 1946.
- 71 See, *HC Debs*, vol. 447, cols. 1787-880, 24 February 1948.
- 72 *HC Debs*, vol. 447, col. 1361, 19 February 1948.
- 73 *HC Debs*, vol. 447, col. 1354, 19 February 1948.
- 74 Section 56 and 70 of The Public Health Act, 1925; Section 3 and 4 of the Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937; Section 41 of The Education Act, 1944.
- 75 *HC Debs*, vol. 447, col. 1791, 19 February 1948.
- 76 A. Bevan, *In Place of Fear (1952)*, p. 51.
- 77 Central Statistical Office, *Monthly Digest of Statistics (January, 1951)*, Table 141.
- 78 *HC Debs*, vol. 421, cols. 1825-26, 9 April 1946.
- 79 *HC Debs*, vol. 416, cols. 1550-80, 29 November 1945.
- 80 See his statements in *HC Debs*, vol. 415, cols. 1247 and 1567, 6 and 8 November 1945.
- 81 *HC Debs*, vol. 421, col. 2752, 17 April 1946.
- 82 See the statement made by Richard Butler, *HC Debs*, vol. 500, col. 280, 6 May 1952.
- 83 *HC Debs*, vol. 446, col. 1179, 29 January 1948; vol. 449, col. WA39, 12 April 1948.
- 84 The Stockholm Lingiad in 1949 and the Empire Games in New Zealand in 1950 were the cases in point. See

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- various correspondence in the Treasury files, PRO, T 227/48 and T 227/49.
- 85 PRO, T 227/49, memorandum by Edward Bridges, 8 April 1949.
- 86 *HC Debs*, vol. 419, col. WA85, 13 February 1946.
- 87 *HC Debs*, vol. 448, cols. 73-74, 6 April 1948.
- 88 This conference was originally proposed by J. B. Priestly. The record of the conference was published afterwards: *British Theatre Conference 1948: Summary of the Proceedings 5-8th February 1948* (1948). Although the theatre managers' associations refused to take part, *The Economist* reported that the conference was 'solid, serious, responsible and on the whole, non-political' (14 February 1948, p. 258). Cripps emphasised that theatre was 'primarily for entertainment and relaxation and not for instruction or education', and that the Government's role was not to own or control the theatre but to give encouragement to it.
- 89 For example, see his personal support for a left-wing theatre group, the Unity Theatre: C. Chambers, *The Story of Unity Theatre* (1989), *passim*.
- 90 See, *HC Debs*, vol. 460, cols. 437-503, 21 January 1949. Lyttleton's words can be found in col. 442.
- 91 See various correspondence between Cripps and Sir Ernest Pooley, Chairman of the Arts Council in the file, PRO, T 227/101.
- 92 *HC Debs*, vol. 466, cols. 2180-204, 6 July 1949.
- 93 *HC Debs*, vol. 466, cols. 922-26, 27 June 1949.
- 94 *HC Debs*, vol. 477, cols. 59-80, 3 July 1950.
- 95 *HC Debs*, vol. 486, col. 861, 10 April 1951. On the extent of British commitment to the Korean rearmament programme, see, P. Hennessy, *Never Again* (1993, Vintage edition), pp. 410-16.
- 96 *HC Debs*, vol. 488, cols. 936-41 and 963-67, 5 June 1951.
- 97 *HC Debs*, vol. 489, cols. 1953-68, 2 July 1951. The Conservative members were also unanimously behind the proposal, congratulating the government for having secured the unprecedented cooperation of the whole industry.
- 98 See, M. Dickinson and S. Street, *Cinema and State: the Film Industry and the Government 1927-84* (1985).
- 99 Board of Trade, *Tendencies to Monopoly in the Cinematograph Film Industry* (1944).
- 100 Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State* (1985), pp. 174.
- 101 N. Pronay, 'The Film Industry', in H. Mercer and others (ed.), *Labour Government and Private Industry* (1992), pp. 219-20.
- 102 See, *HC Debs*, vol. 415, cols. 1084-85, 6 November 1945; vol. 420, col. 1689, 19 March 1946.
- 103 *HC Debs*, vol. 439, cols. 1447-54, 2 July 1947.
- 104 Film remittances made up only four per cent of the total dollar expenditure: see, Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State* (1985), p. 179. Dalton well recognised this, and noted in his diary that the imported film duty was one of several 'symbolical cuts' in saving

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- dollars: see, B. Pimlott (ed.), *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40, 1945-60* (1986), p. 404.
- 105 This was repeatedly stated by both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Glenvil Hall). See, *HC Debs*, vol. 439, col. 1449, 2 July 1947; vol. 443, col. 1464, 3 November 1947.
- 106 Central Statistical Office, *Annual Abstract of Statistics* (1955), Table 92.
- 107 I. Jarvie, 'British Trade Policy versus Hollywood, 1947-1948: "food before flicks?"', *Historical Journal of Films, Radio and Television*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1986), p. 19.
- 108 Pronay, 'The film industry', p. 223.
- 109 An influential article which claims that the Dalton duty was disastrous is P. Foster, 'J. Arther Rank and the Shrinking Screen', in M. Sissons and P. French (ed.), *Age of Austerity 1945-1951* (1963).
- 110 Figures for the year ending October 1939 to 1946 are taken from Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State* (1985), p. 179 and Jarvie, 'British Trade Policy', p. 22. Figures for 1946 to 1949 are in Cmd. 7928, *United Kingdom Balance of Payments 1946-1947*, no. 2 (1950), Table 1. The 1949 figure is a provisional one.
- 111 For Parliamentary debates on the issue, see, *HC Debs*, vol. 439, cols. 1447-54, 2 July 1947; cols. 2276-314, 9 July 1947; vol. 443, cols. 1463-94, 3 November 1947.
- 112 *HC Debs*, vol. 415, col. 2541, 16 November 1945.
- 113 *HC Debs*, vol. 439, col. 206, 24 June 1947.
- 114 *The Times*, 7 August 1947.
- 115 See, O'Brien's critique, *HC Debs*, vol. 443, cols. 1473-76, 3 November 1947.
- 116 These opinion polls are quoted in Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State* (1985), p. 195.
- 117 *The Board of Trade Journal*, 17 April 1948, p. 742.
- 118 See the statement by Glenvil Hall, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, *HC Debs*, vol. 443, cols. 1468-69.
- 119 A more detailed account of the negotiation process is provided in Jarvie, 'British Trade Policy', pp. 32-36.
- 120 The main point in the agreement was that for the first two years, beginning in June 1948, the net remittance to both new and re-issued American films was fixed at 4.25 million pounds per year. The full text of the agreement was published as a Command Paper: Cmd. 7421, *Memorandum of Agreement between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Motion Picture Industry of the United States of America dated 11th March, 1948* (1948).
- 121 *The Times*, 12 March 1948.
- 122 *The Economist*, 13 March 1948.
- 123 *The News Chronicle*, 12 March 1948, quoted in Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State* (1985), p. 190. Dickinson and Street write that the 'press in Britain, both on the left and the right, was highly critical', but this is simply wrong as is shown.
- 124 *Ibid.*

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- 125 The following description is largely based on *ibid*, pp. 199-211.
  - 126 *The Board of Trade Journal*, 19 June 1948, p. 1209. For supporting films, the quota was fixed at 25 per cent.
  - 127 Two years later, it was lowered again, this time to 30 per cent: *The Board of Trade Journal*, 26 March 1949, p. 638 and 18 March 1950, p. 531. The quota for supporting films remained 25 per cent.
  - 128 This was testified to by Wilson himself: see Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State* (1985), p. 214.
  - 129 *The Board of Trade Journal*, 31 July 1948, p. 213.
  - 130 Board of Trade, *The Report of the Working Party on Film Production Costs* (1949).
  - 131 Cmd. 7837, *Distribution and Exhibition of Cinematograph Films* (1949), p. 61.
  - 132 *HC Debs*, vol. 520, cols. 2034-35, 20 November 1953. See also, Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State* (1985), pp. 219-21.
  - 133 On the activities of the War Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting, see A. Briggs, *Sound and Vision: The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1979), pp. 32-42.
  - 134 Cmd. 6852, *Broadcasting Policy* (1946), pp. 5-6 and 14.
  - 135 Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), p. 49.
  - 136 Cmd. 8291, *Broadcasting: Memorandum on the Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949* (1951).
  - 137 Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), pp. 396-97 and 409.
  - 138 Morrison's words are quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 412-13.
  - 139 *Ibid.*, p. 420.
  - 140 Catering Wages Commission, *The Rehabilitation of the Catering Industry* (1945).
  - 141 *Ibid*, pp. 25-38.
  - 142 Catering Wages Commission, *Development of the Catering, Holiday and Tourist Services* (1946), pp. 1-5.
  - 143 *Ibid*.
  - 144 *HC Debs*, vol. 423, col. WA387, 7 June 1946.
  - 145 *HL Debs*, vol. 144, col. 735, 10 December 1946.
  - 146 For example, in 1938, about £28 million was earned, while the British spent about £40 millions abroad. This trend did not change during that period when there was a travel restriction for British people between the summer of 1947 and the spring of 1948. See, Cmd. 7928, Table 1.
  - 147 *The Economist*, 23 February 1946, pp. 311-12.
  - 148 See Harold Wilson's reply in *HC Debs*, vol. 466, cols. 52-53, 21 June 1949.
  - 149 *HC Debs*, vol. 466, col. 41, 21 June 1949.
  - 150 *The Board of Trade Journal*, 4 February 1950, pp. 232-33.
  - 151 For the efforts made by the Government, see the statement of Wilson, the President of the Board of the Trade: *HC Debs*, vol. 466, cols. 56-60.
  - 152 Cmd. 7928, Table 1. The earnings were £28 million in 1938, £12 million in 1946, £21 million in 1947, and £33 million in 1948.
  - 153 One of the earliest examinations of the subject was PEP, 'Planning for Holidays', *Planning*, no. 194 (1942).

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- 154 National Council of Social Service, *Holidays: A Study of the Post-war Problems and the Field of Non-Commercial Enterprise* (1945), p. 2.
  - 155 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
  - 156 The Catering Wages Commission, *The Staggering of Holidays* (1945).
  - 157 *The Economist*, 2 February and 4 May 1946.
  - 158 Catering Wages Commission, *Third Annual Report 1945-1946* (1946), p. 3.
  - 159 Catering Wages Commission, *Fourth Annual Report 1946-1947* (1947), p. 6.
  - 160 Catering Wages Commission, *Fifth Annual Report 1947-1948* (1948), p. 3.
  - 161 Catering Wages Commission, *Seventh Annual Report 1949-1950* (1951), p. 6.
  - 162 Catering Wages Commission, *Development of the Catering, Holiday and Tourist Services* (1946), pp. 24-25.
  - 163 P. Slater, 'Final Report on the Demand for Holidays in 1946 and 1947' (1947) and 'Report on the Demand for Holidays in 1947 and 1948' (1948).
  - 164 P. Slater, 'Final Report on the Demand for Holidays in 1946 and 1947' (1947), Table 5 and 16.
  - 165 Cmd. 7695, *Royal Commission on Population, Report* (1949), p. 189.
  - 166 Labour Party, *Labour Believes in Britain* (1949), p. 20. This was then included in a 1950 election campaign pamphlet, *Let Us Win Through Together: A Declaration of Labour Policy for the Consideration of the Nation* (1950). More detailed proposals on this question can be found in a Fabian pamphlet, D. Chapman, *Holidays and the State* (1949).
  - 167 *HC Debs*, vol. 476, cols. 1763-1860, 23 June 1950.
  - 168 *The Times*, 11 and 13 February 1947.
  - 169 On the chronology of these restrictions, see, *Listener*, 13 February 1947, p. 287, and 6 March 1947, pp. 330-331. See also, *The Ministry of Labour Gazette*, March 1947, p. 82. Interestingly, there was no mention about the ban on greyhound racing in the *Listener* at all.
  - 170 PRO, PREM 8/881, memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Fuel Committee by Shinwell, 27 February 1947.
  - 171 PRO, PREM 8/881, memorandum to the Prime Minister, 28 February 1948.
  - 172 PRO, PREM 8/881, extract from the minutes of the Fuel Committee, 29 February 1947.
  - 173 PRO, PREM 8/881, report by the Official Steering Committee on Economic Development to the Cabinet Fuel Committee, 3 March 1947.
  - 174 E. Shinwell, *I've Lived Through It All* (1973), pp. 194-195. Up to April 1947, the average rate of absenteeism in the coal industry reached 15 per cent. which was the highest recorded since 1935. The rate then dropped to less than 11 per cent. See, A. J. Robertson, *The Bleak Midwinter 1947* (Manchester, 1987), Table 2.
  - 175 PRO, PREM 8/881, letter to K. P. Witney, Home Office, 20 March 1947.
  - 176 *HC Debs*, vol. 434, cols. 1495-1500, 13 March 1947.

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- 177 *The Times*, 14 March 1947. Another Conservative member had repeatedly asked for the restriction of sports meetings which might interfere with production. See, *HC Debs*, vol. 419, col. 1294, 21 February 1947, and vol. 419, col. 1915, 27 February 1947.
  - 178 Under the Betting and Lotteries Act 1934, dog racing fixtures were granted annually by local licensing authorities. Some tracks had fixtures only on weekdays. For these tracks, Shinwell's second Order could only mean a complete ban, because under the 1934 Act fixtures could not be changed as wished. Under the 1934 Act, it was also impossible to hold double meetings on Saturdays, in compensation for the lack of mid-week fixtures. See, *HC Debs*, vol. 435, cols. 765-816, 21 March 1947.
  - 179 *HC Debs*, vol. 435, cols. 1419-22, 27 March 1947.
  - 180 PRO, PREM 8/881, memorandum submitted by the Home Secretary to the Cabinet Production Committee, 6 December 1947.
  - 181 PRO, PREM 8/881, extract from a minutes of the Production Committee, 12 December 1947.
  - 182 PRO, CAB 128/12, C. M. (48) 1st Conclusions, 6 January 1948.
  - 183 PRO, PREM 8/881, letter to Clement Attlee, 12 February 1948.
  - 184 *HC Debs*, vol. 448, cols. WA341-42, 25 March 1948.
  - 185 PRO, PREM 8/881, memorandum to the Prime Minister, 5 January 1948.
  - 186 A. J. Robertson argued that there were prejudices, in his book, *The Bleak Midwinter 1947* (Manchester, 1987), pp. 92-93 and 118-19.
  - 187 *HC Debs*, vol. 458, col. WA117, 24 November 1948. In 1938, the figure was 5.5 million.
  - 188 *HC Debs*, vol. 436, col. 78, 15 April 1947.
  - 189 *HC Debs*, vol. 444, cols. 405-408, 12 November 1947.
  - 190 M. Clapson, *A Bit of a Flutter: Popular Gambling and English Society, c.1823-1961* (Manchester, 1992), p. 152.
  - 191 See the clear explanation made by the new Chancellor, Sir Stafford Cripps: *HC Debs*, vol. 444, col. 1917, 25 November 1947.
  - 192 *HC Debs*, vol. 444, cols. 1927-28, 25 November 1947. The Labour Member of Parliament was Dr. Hyacinth Morgan, representing Rochdale.
  - 193 See the debates, *HC Debs*, vol. 444, cols. 1811-13, 1849-56, 1863-64, and 1917-18, 25 November 1947.
  - 194 *HC Debs*, vol. 449, cols. 65-67, 6 April 1948.
  - 195 Cmd. 8190, *Royal Commission on Betting, Lotteries and Gambling 1949-51, Report* (1951).
  - 196 *HC Debs*, vol. 433, cols. 485-98, 12 February 1947; vol. 444, cols. 1101-12, 18 November 1947.
  - 197 Labour Party Research Department, 'The Enjoyment of Leisure', R. D. 43, February 1947. This document can be found in MRC, MSS.292/812.2/2.
  - 198 PRO, T 227/69, memorandum of P. D. Proctor, 6 September 1949.
  - 199 See various minutes in PRO, T 227/69.

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- 200 CAB 128/23, C. C. (51) 5th Conclusions, 8 November 1951. Salisbury was against the continuance of the Festival Gardens on the grounds that it was not desirable for British people to spend 'thousands of pounds on the funfair' while Britain was in deep economic crisis: PRO, PREM 11/101, memorandum, to W. S. Churchill, [November 1951].
- 201 *HC Debs*, vol. 518, col. WA255, 20 October 1953.

### Chapter 3: The Conservative Governments and Leisure, 1951-60

In this chapter, the roles and attitudes of Conservative Governments on the question of leisure are examined. Some of the topics have been well studied. For example, Asa Briggs has written a detailed account of Tory attitudes towards the introduction of commercial television. On the other hand, there is little literature on topics such as the entertainments tax. Like Labour, Conservative Governments of the period did not have any coherent leisure policy. This chapter will, therefore, survey various topics and highlight major trends in Conservative thinking and practice on the question of leisure in the 1950s.

#### Countryside to national heritage

Harold Macmillan succeeded Dalton, the minister responsible for amenities in town and country.<sup>1</sup> By this time, some defects of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, had become evident. Increasingly, local authorities took a hostile attitude towards any proposal for the designation of national parks. They resented the fact that local rate-payers had to bear the maintenance cost of a national park, while visitors were largely non-local residents. They insisted that national beauty was already adequately protected under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. They disliked the idea of joint administration with neighbouring authorities where the national park stretched over several county councils.<sup>2</sup> In brief, the 1949 Act did not give adequate powers to the National Parks



Commission, by which the Commission could implement effective action to preserve landscapes and encourage open air recreation, overcoming localised vested interests.

But unlike Silkin, Macmillan and successive Conservative ministers were not very enthusiastic about the issue. They allowed major economic and technical projects, such as the 750 feet steel BBC television mast in the Dartmoor National Park, the nuclear power plant in Snowdonia, the oil discharge installation on the edge of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, and the Ballistic Missile Early Warning Station on the North Yorkshire Moors, to be built on the grounds of national interest, and at the cost of the national parks.<sup>3</sup> Lord Silkin, the creator of the original Act, was critical:

having made up their minds that here are ten [National Park] areas which they have selected as areas of outstanding beauty, areas which must be enhanced and where the people of this country are to be encouraged to come for enjoyment and recreation - having done all that, are they going to permit industrial development for these areas quite contrary to the character of the areas?<sup>4</sup>

In its eleventh annual report, the National Parks Commission also expressed its 'profound disappointment at the number of occasions when National Park interests have had to be set a side in order to allow developments alien to the whole conception of National Parks'.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from increasing the number of designated National Parks to ten, as well as the long-distance footpaths to six in 1959,<sup>6</sup> the Conservative administration did not take any positive or imaginative action. Despite strong and repeated

pressure and practical proposals for the amendment of the Act from the National Parks Commission, the local authorities concerned, and voluntary organisations, the Governments refused to do anything about it on financial grounds.<sup>7</sup> In fact, government expenditure was a very small amount of money. When a Labour member put forward an amendment in the form of a Private Member's Bill in 1959, the Ministry itself felt that there were no sound grounds for refusing the amendment on financial grounds.<sup>8</sup> The Government rejected it on the procedural grounds that changes in financial arrangements could not be proposed through a Private Member's Bill.<sup>9</sup> Thus, even in 1961, the total central government grant to the National Parks remained less than £70,000.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, the National Land Fund was decreased from £50 million when it was created by Dalton, to £10 million in 1957. Enoch Powell, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury at the time, underlined his dislike of the fund, arguing that it was in fact a non-existent paper fund, which would have to be supported with public money when it was actually used up.<sup>11</sup> At the end of the debate, Dalton described Powell's reply as 'most unsatisfactory, unhelpful, unimaginative and pedantic'.<sup>12</sup> In effect, Powell buried Dalton's original hope once and for all that the necessary money for the provision of National Parks could be raised from National Land Fund. On the positive side, the Historic Houses and Ancient Monument Act, 1953, was passed under the Conservative Government, in which the Ministry gave grants to historic buildings, making use of the National Land Fund.

However, this legislation had originally been formulated by Labour just before its defeat at the general election of 1951.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of the 1950s, the whole issue of recreational amenities in both town and countryside needs to be reconsidered in the light of various new social developments, such as shorter working hours, higher wages and increasing private car ownership. These developments had made the initial assumptions of both the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, and the National Parks and the Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, at least partly inadequate.<sup>14</sup> However, Conservative Governments undertook no initiatives on the question in the 1950s.

#### Debates on entertainments tax

During the last Budget debate of the post-war Labour Government, a new clause which would reduce entertainments duty on speedway racing was put forward. Speedway racing had been included in the higher scale of the entertainments duty along with motor, horse and dog racing and the cinema. Ian Orr-Ewing, the mover of the amendment, explained first of all that speedway racing was in considerable financial difficulty.<sup>15</sup> He then offered several reasons why this particular motor sport should be entitled to the lower scale of the entertainments duty along with cricket, football and other live sports and entertainments.<sup>16</sup> This amendment had wide support in the House across party lines,<sup>17</sup> and inevitably led to a formidable debate about how a reasonable distinction could be made in charging a differentiated scale

of tax between one kind of sport and another. It was acknowledged by the Labour Government that this distinction was not easily justified. The Government promised to review the whole structure of the Entertainments Duty before the next Budget.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1952 Budget, the incoming Conservative Government certainly dealt with the question. R. A. Butler, the new Chancellor, proposed the creation of a separate Entertainments Duty scale for all kind of sports. The new scale was roughly in the middle of the existing two scales.<sup>19</sup> This meant that while the rate for horse, dog and motor racing was to be reduced roughly by half, football, cricket and other sports were to have to pay twice as much.<sup>20</sup> This proposal caused fierce protests from both sides of the House. The main reason for the opposition was not the reduction of the rate for racing sports, but the increase for other sports. Labour put an amendment which would reduce the rate for all sports and racing, to the lowest level.<sup>21</sup> Every opposition speech was made with detailed financial statistics and accounts of how seriously particular clubs or sports *would suffer under the new rate*. Gaitskell asked the Conservative Government why a £2 million loss, which would be caused by the amendment, could not be forgone while Butler lavishly conceded some £24 million in purchase tax and other items in his Budget proposal. Gaitskell also questioned the Chancellor's new differentiation in the scale of the duty: why should sports and games be taxed at a higher rate than plays and music?

Butler rejected the amendment. This new scale was brought in as a result of an inquiry made by an independent body, the Customs and Excise and, he could not lower the scale of duty on all sports and games, because a £2 million loss for this particular form of public revenue would be too high. He did not think it possible to draw any justifiable distinctions between one sort of sport and another. However, he showed a considerable sympathy for cricket, claiming that the sport's attendance had fallen steadily since 1947, and postponed the date on which the increase in duty was to be imposed until the current cricket season had finished.<sup>22</sup> He further promised to review the position of football before the Report stage, but failed to make any concessions.<sup>23</sup>

Save for two Conservative members, all the speakers asked the Chancellor for concessions and amendments in favour of the sports which hitherto had enjoyed the lower scale of tax. However, there was a different approach to sports between the two Parties. Conservative members spoke mainly for cricket, and to a far lesser extent, rugby union. Labour members spoke primarily on behalf of association football, although they also defended other sports, such as rugby league, boxing and athletics, as well as cricket. In defence of cricket, a Conservative member emphasised the special place the sport held in national life.<sup>24</sup> Another Conservative talked about the contribution the sport made towards Commonwealth relationships.<sup>25</sup> The statement that association football was 'the finest safety valve' in British industrial centres was also made by a Conservative member.<sup>26</sup> The importance of 'the character building angle

of sport in this country' was mentioned, again by a Conservative member.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, most Labour members regarded the importance of sport primarily as a form of enjoyable relaxation from industrial life.

In the following year, Butler proposed two main alterations to entertainments duty. He suggested the exemption of amateur sports, provided that the sport's organisation was non-profit making, and that no payment was made to anyone actually participating. He also proposed the total exemption of cricket from the duty. The Chancellor explained that in the case of cricket the exemption of amateur sport would not function; that cricket occupied 'a special place among sports, not only as forming part of the English tradition but as a common interest helping to bind together the various countries of the Commonwealth'; and that the total tax revenues from cricket were small enough to forego.<sup>28</sup> The exemption of amateur sports did not cause any controversy. However, the suggested exemption of cricket caused uproar in Parliament.<sup>29</sup> Gaitskell, while emphasising that there was no opposition to the exemption of cricket, asked why other sports and games were being discriminated against. He also pointed out that the Chancellor was giving away £200 million in the same Budget, while Labour's amendment that sought exemption of all other sports and games excluding racing, would cost no more than £4 million.

Most Conservative members felt that they could not defend the special treatment of cricket which Butler proposed.<sup>30</sup> The alleged financial difficulties of cricket clubs could not be sustained because a good deal of evidence

showed an even more serious financial position among football and other sporting clubs, especially among the smaller clubs. In fact, as on the previous occasion, the Chancellor had almost no friends to support his proposal. Butler and his Financial Secretary could only reply by defending cricket, an issue which Labour was not challenging. In the 1954 Budget, again, various amendments aimed to reduce the tax burden on sports were put forward by members of both parties, and the Chancellor and the Financial Secretary were again in the difficult position of defending discrimination in favour of cricket.<sup>31</sup>

After the General Election of 1955, the issue returned to the House of Commons the following year. During the election campaign, Labour had promised that all the entertainments tax would be abolished if it won. The newly appointed Chancellor, Harold Macmillan, resisted concessions on the grounds that he had proposed none in his Budget except for savings. However, he frankly admitted that the existing structure of the entertainments duty was not justifiable, and promised a radical reform of it the following year.<sup>32</sup>

The drastic change in the 1957 Budget was made possible not just because of parliamentary pressure but also because of the clear change in people's tastes in entertainments. The new Chancellor, Peter Thorneycroft, stated that some new forms of entertainment, particularly television, had been expanding at the cost of older forms. He proposed a new Excise Duty on television viewing, a pound per year. Secondly, he proposed a total exemption of duty on all

sports, racing and live performances. Thirdly, he wanted to reduce the tax on cinemas by approximately 20 per cent.<sup>33</sup>

### Film industry

Cinema had been by far the largest source of entertainments duty since the pre-war period. No less than three-quarters of the total revenue came from this industry.<sup>34</sup> Under the Conservatives, as the decline of the cinema became increasingly apparent, the demand for tax relief became louder than ever. In 1952, Butler at first refused to consider it but after both Labour and Conservative members demanded a reduction, particularly for small cinemas, the Chancellor made a small concession.<sup>35</sup> The following year, despite unanimous support for a tax reduction of one kind or another, Butler was not moved. He replied that small cinemas did not suffer much more than medium sized ones and attendances were still higher than pre-war.<sup>36</sup>

It was not until 1954 that Butler reduced the tax to an appreciable extent. He introduced a reduction ranging from a half penny to one and half pence for every admission. It was estimated that the Treasury would lose £3.5 million in a full year,<sup>37</sup> though this was less than half as much as the industry had demanded.<sup>38</sup> In 1956, as mentioned already, Harold Macmillan, promised a comprehensive review of the entire structure of the entertainments duty in his next Budget. The review would be made in the light of the development of new forms of entertainments, particularly television.<sup>39</sup> Although the threat posed by television broadcasting to the cinema industry was mentioned as early



as 1953 in the House by a Labour member,<sup>40</sup> this was the first time that the Government had admitted that it regarded television as a serious competitor to the cinema and other form of entertainments.

In 1957, as described earlier, Thorneycroft abolished entertainments duty on all except cinema. He made a concession to the cinema industry, relieving it of about £6.5 million duty in a full a year. Instead, he created a new excise duty, the television levy.<sup>41</sup> This structural change in the entertainments duty, however, could not arrest the decline of the cinema. In the following year, the new Chancellor, Derick Heathcoat-Amory, admitted that attendances had dropped more than ever. He then proposed to halve the incidence of duty on cinemas at a cost of more than £14 million to the Treasury.<sup>42</sup> This was by far the biggest measure of relief in the history of the entertainments duty. A further concession was made to help smaller cinemas in 1959.<sup>43</sup> In the general election campaign of that year, the Labour Party made it clear that the duty on cinemas would be ended if Labour took office.<sup>44</sup> The re-elected Conservative Government agreed and abolished the duty in 1960.

One interesting point about the parliamentary debates on the cinema duty concerned attitudes towards the social status of cinema, which changed gradually in the course of the 1950s. Labour continued to regard the cinema as the most important people's entertainment, arguing that further closure of cinemas should be stopped. But the case for intervention to protect cinema exhibitors was progressively

losing ground in the late 1950s. Some Conservative members began to offer an alternative view on cinema closure. In 1957, for example, William Shepherd spoke as follows:

I do not think that our task is to expand the number of retail outlets for films. I regard the number of cinemas as excessive today, and however generous we are in terms of remission of taxation we shall not prevent a substantial number of cinemas from going out of existence in the next two or three years. I might go further and say that the general health of the industry might be improved by such a process.<sup>45</sup>

During the following year, when the Entertainments Duty on cinemas was halved, the Chancellor took a similar view:

I must say frankly that it can not possibly be an object of Government policy to keep open the doors of every cinema in the country, regardless of the tastes and habits of the public. If people prefer to occupy more of their leisure time in other forms of entertainments and less in film-going, some reduction in the number of cinemas seems inevitable.<sup>46</sup>

In the early 1950s, it was commonly argued across party lines that the closure of cinemas, especially smaller ones, would cause inconvenience to the public, because they would have to travel far to see films. But in the late 1950s, a Conservative member could argue that some village people did not patronise local cinemas any longer but travelled to bigger cinemas in other towns to watch films in more comfortable circumstances.<sup>47</sup> The increasing ownership of televisions and cars was regarded as the main elements in the changing social habits of the nation. William Shepherd pointed out that the smaller, older and less luxurious cinemas faced difficulty, because the more affluent workers

wanted good comfortable seats.<sup>48</sup> It was generally agreed that, in the case of an isolated village where there was only a small cinema, its survival was important. But this was because the cinema was regarded as one of few amenities in a countryside which was worthy of preservation, not because of any feeling for the cinema as such. Although there was genuine concern from Labour about the future of small cinemas, the party's unqualified demands for protection of the industry increasingly sounded old and repetitive. By the end of the decade, the argument that the decline of the cinema was caused by a change in people's social habits seems to have become more powerful.

What did the Tory government do for the production side of the industry? As shown in the previous chapter, the Labour Government created three main means to support British film production: the National Film Finance Corporation, the quota legislation, and the voluntary levy. These arrangements were accepted by Conservative Governments without any major changes.

During the 1950s, there was controversy about the definition of a 'British film' which would qualify for subsidy from the levy.<sup>49</sup> Under the original Act of 1948, eligible films had to be made in Britain or in the British dominions, and the film makers had to be British subjects or British companies. In 1959, when the Act was due for renewal, the Government introduced a new clause which restricted what qualified as a British film - there should be no more than one foreigner among the producers and

directors.<sup>50</sup> However, this clause was eventually withdrawn, after the British Film Producers Association made it clear that it would no longer oppose the engagement of foreign directors or producers in making British films.<sup>51</sup> MPs of both parties agreed that the economic advantages derived from Hollywood involvement in British film-making was more important than an illusory cultural gain stemming from the preservation of authentic British film. The Government also introduced a clause which treated joint productions with European film makers as British.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, earlier in that year, Commonwealth films were disqualified from the category of British, and were ineligible for the subsidy.<sup>53</sup>

#### The end of state monopoly

The Conservative Governments ended state monopoly in two fields related to leisure: the state management of public houses in the new towns and the BBC monopoly of broadcasting. The Labour Government passed the Licensing Act in 1949 under which only state managed public houses were licensed in the new towns. Labour insisted that this should lead to proper planning in numbers and quality. There was, however, a strong resentment among Labour members against the monopolistic tendency of breweries and the tied-house system. They saw the tied system as denying the public free choice of beer. The Conservatives, on the other hand, regarded Labour's legislation as another piece of nationalisation.<sup>54</sup> Soon after they took office, they repealed it, talking about freedom and choice in a very

different way from that of Labour. Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, the Home Secretary, summed up their view:

The major question is whether there is to be the opportunity of freedom of choice - and there has been no evidence brought forward to suggest that there will not be competition of public houses between different brewers - or whether we are to be limited to the beer of State breweries. That is the real question of monopoly.<sup>55</sup>

However, the far more formidable issue was the broadcasting monopoly. The incoming Conservative Government published its own memorandum on the Beveridge Report in May 1952.<sup>56</sup> It accepted that BBC services should remain unchanged, without any commercial element. Instead, it proposed the end of the BBC monopoly in television broadcasting.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, during the debates on the Beveridge Report in the House of Lords, 17 out of 29 speakers, including many aged Tory members, opposed the Government White Paper.<sup>58</sup> The debates in the Commons, however, were divided more on party lines, because a three-line whip was exercised by the Government. Asa Briggs analysed the arguments produced in the following way:

Labour speakers proclaimed themselves supporters of the *status quo* and made much of words like 'traditional', while the Conservatives, pressing eagerly for change, talked of the need for 'radical' alterations and 'trusting the people'.<sup>59</sup>

Briggs noted that, to many Conservatives, Herbert Morrison's opposition speech sounded like 'the discredited past'.<sup>60</sup>

Gallup Polls taken in August 1952 revealed that one in two television set owners favoured the introduction of commercial television, although most British people were

content with the present state of broadcasting.<sup>61</sup> In the following year, the political division between the Conservatives and Labour over television consolidated. In June 1953, for example, Attlee told a miners' rally that if the Conservative Government introduced privately sponsored television, Labour would reverse it.<sup>62</sup> Iain Macleod, the young Tory Minister of Health, sent a letter to the indecisive Harold Macmillan:

Far from losing votes we would in fact gain them, and although sponsored television will no doubt be a small item in comparison with the great issues that the next Election will be fought on, I will certainly welcome our opponents taking the line that they must deprive the public of a choice of entertainment.<sup>63</sup>

Significantly, Attlee's remark reportedly consolidated opinion in the Tory Party against the current monopoly.<sup>64</sup> Yet the Cabinet, including Churchill, Eden and Salisbury, still disliked the fact that the question of commercial television was becoming an issue of party politics. Churchill was angered when Conservative Central Office published a four page pamphlet entitled *There's Free Speech! Why not Free Switch?* to attack the opponents of commercial television.<sup>65</sup> Woolton reluctantly hoped that the remaining 19,000 copies in stock would be quietly forgotten.<sup>66</sup> Another interesting point was the fact that, at this time, according to a Gallup Poll, more Labour Party voters supported the idea of commercial television than either Conservatives or Liberals.<sup>67</sup>

In November 1953, the Government published another White Paper,<sup>68</sup> which outlined the suggested new television

service. The proposal was to establish a public television authority, which 'would hire its facilities to privately financed companies who would provide programmes and draw revenue from advertisers'.<sup>69</sup> The authority accepted advertising but not sponsoring: the latter was closely associated with American commercial television which was generally perceived in Britain as of a much lower standard than the BBC. The latest Gallup Poll showed that nearly half of voters, and half of each party's supporters, favoured competition in the television broadcasting service.<sup>70</sup>

When the Television Bill was introduced and debated in Parliament in 1954, there were rebellious members in both parties, though opposition was particularly formidable amongst Conservatives in the Lords. However, the political division was firmly established between the Conservatives and Labour. Gordon Walker, in his winding up speech for Labour, again warned that Labour had the right to scrap any legislation on commercial television after the general election,<sup>71</sup> although it accepted the desirability of a second non-commercial television channel. Labour proposed the establishment of another public broadcasting corporation, or the addition of a second channel to the BBC itself.<sup>72</sup> Although Labour maintained its opposition to the idea of commercial television for a while after the Independent Television Authority actually started broadcasting in September 1955,<sup>73</sup> by the general election of 1959 it publicly declared that the abolition of commercial television was no longer on its agenda.<sup>74</sup> There were no substantial debates on television in the latter half

of the 1950s. It was not until the appointment of the Pilkington Committee in 1960, which was the first official committee since the Beveridge Report, that a review of the existing broadcasting system started.<sup>75</sup>

### Community centres, youth service and the playing fields

The Conservative record on the provision of community recreational and social facilities was no better than that of the Labour Government. When they took office in 1951, they found it impossible to lift any of the restrictions imposed by Labour on capital expenditure for the facilities. Even worse, in February 1952, on grounds of national economy, the MoE suspended its grants for playing fields' development completely.<sup>76</sup> In 1952, The National Playing Fields Association revealed that on average only 1.46 acres of playgrounds per 1,000 of population existed in urban areas, against the 6 acre standard which was considered as essential by many town planners.<sup>77</sup> The Association also reported that nearly all the urban local authorities could not meet the demands for playing facilities, particularly pitches for team games.<sup>78</sup> The Ministry of Housing and Local Government also maintained the general ban on building licences for community facilities in the new towns and in the new housing estates.<sup>79</sup>

It was only at the end of 1954 that the MoE was able to announce a relaxation of this complete ban in financing new playing fields. The Ministry's restrictions on capital grant in aid for community centres, village halls and youth clubs were also relaxed at the same time.<sup>80</sup> The ban on licences



for community buildings had been removed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government a year earlier.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the Town and Country Planning Act, 1954, made it possible for local authorities to obtain financial assistance from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for the provision of public open spaces.<sup>82</sup>

However, none of these relaxations in policy remained operative for long. For example, from 1956, capital expenditure on playing fields projects were again put under severe restriction.<sup>83</sup> In 1960, local authorities were still not allowed to build new youth or community centres because of close government control of further education building programmes.<sup>84</sup> The severe restrictions in grants to the youth service under Conservative Governments was also apparent. The amounts given declined in monetary terms to the mid-1950s, though allowing for inflation was a much bigger fall.<sup>85</sup>

What kind of further education policies did Conservative Governments offer in the 1950s? As regards the youth service, firstly, the first Conservative Government offered nothing but successive drastic cuts. In 1952, the Minister of Education remarked that the youth service was one of the 'frills of education'.<sup>86</sup> In its second term in office, however, the government was forced to pay greater attention to youth, because the question was gradually becoming a social issue, as the bulge in the adolescent population started. Many adults expressed their shock over the appearance and behaviour of modern adolescents. Juvenile

delinquency started to attract unprecedented public attention.

Thus, as early as July 1955, the Parliamentary Secretary to the MoE promised a review of youth service policy.<sup>87</sup> However, only a further enquiry into public support for the service was promised during the following two years.<sup>88</sup> No increase in grants was given. The idea that youth leaders should be a profession was completely reversed, as Government policy was now that the youth service should depend upon voluntary and part-time workers.<sup>89</sup>

In July 1957, the Select Committee on Estimates on Youth Service Grants was finally launched. The MoE was severely criticised in the resulting report not only because 'a sharp reduction' in government grants had been made, but also because the Ministry was 'little interested in the present state of the Service and apathetic about its future'.<sup>90</sup> Yet in early 1958, Geoffrey Lloyd, the Minister of Education, merely stated that he would 'encourage and foster' the youth service, without any concrete proposals.<sup>91</sup> He also made it clear again that no increase of grants was available. However, in April 1958, a letter from the Ministry to the Treasury stated the following:

My Minister has come to the conclusion that he cannot stall any longer on this issue. Quite apart from the public pressure on him to take a more positive line, he considered that the Government needs some good, up-to-date and forward-looking advice on the right policy to adopt towards this somewhat ill-defined collection of organisations and activities, with its tendency to think in terms of the social problems of the 1930s.<sup>92</sup>

The Treasury was reluctant to do anything which would encourage the demands for increased expenditure. At the Home Affairs Committee, Geoffrey Lloyd pressed the case that an enquiry committee on the youth service was necessary, and it was agreed that this should be established with safeguards.<sup>93</sup> The result was the appointment of the Albemarle Committee on the youth service in England and Wales in November 1958, and the publication of that body's report two years later. It summarised the post-war history of the youth service and traced the start of its disintegration in the late 1940s:

. . . with the Ministry unable to give the signal for advance certain authorities lost heart. Public interest flagged too, and not surprisingly voluntary bodies felt the effect... All the same the Youth Service has not been given the treatment it hoped for and thought it deserved, and has suffered in morale and public esteem in consequence.<sup>94</sup>

During the 1959 election campaign, both parties underlined their future commitment to the improvement and expansion of the youth service. In the post election Queen's Speech, the new Conservative Government stated its intention to implement this promise. During the debate on the question, many members of both parties expressed concern about the increased number of school leavers who would peak in 1962. It was generally agreed that the much discussed adolescent delinquency of the time was in fact the work of a small minority. Nevertheless, most members tended to assume that the extension of the youth service was necessary to curb the increased number of juvenile crimes.<sup>95</sup>

The Albemarle Committee made it clear that the traditional ideals in the youth service, such as 'spiritual values', 'citizenship', 'service', 'dedication', 'leadership' and 'character building', were now out of date. The youth service should not offer anything 'packaged' such as a 'way of life' or 'set of values'. Instead, the principles of 'flexibility' and 'variety' were emphasised.<sup>96</sup> As practical measures, the Committee pressed the Government urgently to recruit and train professional youth leaders; increase both central and local government grants; and produce modern and attractive accommodation to suit modern teenagers.

The Conservative Government reacted positively and implemented many of these recommendations. It created the Youth and Adult Services Branch, separated from the Further Education Branch, in the Ministry; set up the Youth Service Development Council as a central consultation machinery; proposed a £3 million building programme in the period 1960-62; created a National College for the Training of Youth Leaders for producing 600 full-time youth leaders by 1966; increased both capital grants and grants to national voluntary organisations; and offered several grants towards new research to 'discover new ways of reaching unattached young people'.<sup>97</sup> Finally, the Architects and Building Branch in the Ministry produced a detailed illustrated pamphlet which described the possible design and layout required for a modern general mixed type of youth club.<sup>98</sup>

Conservative attitudes towards the provision of community centres were very much the same as those for the

youth service. Until the very end of the decade, no new initiatives were undertaken. The Ministry had been content to reissue a 1944 pamphlet on community centres until 1960, when its stocks ran low.<sup>99</sup> Only then, had officials come to see that was out of date. At a meeting of community associations, an official stated that the pamphlet displayed 'just too much of a hint of over-simplification, of compulsory companionship, of determination to do good to other people whether they want to have good done to them or not'.<sup>100</sup> He continued that full employment, increased home ownership, possession of televisions, radio and private cars, as well as increased leisure and educational facilities and opportunities, all challenged the traditional *raison d'être* of community centres. He suggested that community centres should now regard their users as customers, rather than as members to be educated in collective leisure experience.

A revised pamphlet, 'Neighbourhood Life' was drafted. However, officials did not think that it fully explored the changing status and meaning of community centres in society. An official wrote:

the conceptions of neighbourly co-operation, of the right use of leisure and of the relations between work, welfare and leisure, have changed since 1944 and are changing still. Even more important, the question or questions of popular culture and of the attitude of central and local government towards it, are now coming up as political issues and may need to be considered all together.<sup>101</sup>

As this shows, during the final period of the Conservative Government, general questions of leisure, especially those

relating to young persons and sport, became a political issue. The Ministry's officials, therefore, decided to postpone the question of a new pamphlet until the other relevant issues were settled.<sup>102</sup>

### Financing the arts

Until the late 1950s, Conservative Governments hardly showed any interest in the arts.<sup>103</sup> In the second half of the 1950s, they were increasingly exposed to the criticism both inside and outside parliament that government support for the arts was seriously inadequate. Because of a lack of money, the Arts Council closed all its regional offices by 1955.<sup>104</sup> Although the Council took this policy to concentrate on financing a small number of provincial organisations of excellence, rather than diffusing small amount of money to many, there was not enough money even to maintain standards among those selected 'power-houses of the arts' outside London.<sup>105</sup> In 1956, the Council reported that:

... in Britain the arts are not sustained from public funds on anything like the scale which is accepted in France, Italy, Germany, Austria, the Soviet Union, Belgium, Holland or Scandinavia. The Arts Council and Local Authorities between them are contributing about £1,000,000 a year. This is not bad going in 10 years, but it is not good enough, even when all allowance has been made for the nation's present economic difficulties.<sup>106</sup>

In the second half of the 1950s, the problems faced by arts establishments deepened. Because of the lack of adequate finance, they could not modernise their accommodation and facilities to suit the tastes of a newly affluent audience.

In turn, this meant difficulty in attracting patrons who wanted comfortable, new, and value for money experiences. It was in the mid-fifties that the Conservative Government first indicated its concern about the state of the provision for the arts. It accepted the Arts Council recommendation that a comprehensive survey of the needs of cultural accommodation in the country should be put in motion. Accordingly, in 1956, an enquiry committee was set up by the Council. It took three years to complete.<sup>107</sup> Although the report was confined to a survey of the needs for cultural buildings in the metropolis, it was noted that since the war, only three new arts facilities had been built in the country.<sup>108</sup>

Soon after this first Arts Council survey was published, another report on the state of the arts in Britain appeared, produced under the chairmanship of Lord Bridges, the former permanent secretary to the Treasury.<sup>109</sup> It emphasised that far too little had been done for the arts outside London, and highlighted the lack of encouragement for new works generally. It also recommended that responsibility for expenditure on the arts should be removed from the Treasury, which had always been negative about increasing grants, to a new body on the lines of the University Grants Committee. The year 1959 was indeed unusual for the arts in Britain. It began with the first-full scale debate on the arts in the House of Commons since the Conservative had come to office. Labour members attacked the Government's record and policy with words like 'miserable', 'neglect' and 'parsimony'.<sup>110</sup> The Government

replied that it had increased financial support substantially, though its inadequacy was accepted on both sides of the House. Shortly afterwards, the Labour Party's plan to double state aid for the arts was leaked to the press.<sup>111</sup> The Conservative chairman of the Parliamentary Arts and Amenity Group wrote to Conservative Central Office that the Labour Party continued to 'play politics ... [with] the question of state aid to the arts' as well as with the question of sport.<sup>112</sup> The Chancellor of the Exchequer was unmoved. He thought that the Labour plan meant more spending and more state control, leading to the creation of a Minister of Culture, all of which would be 'at odds' with traditional British government policy. He emphasised that the Conservative Government had a good record on the arts, and that it would be enough to express its intention to continue that policy.<sup>113</sup>

Both parties published special pamphlets in the summer of 1959, with a view to the coming general election. The Conservative pamphlet, though unofficial, criticised the Government increase in grants as 'too small': 'the State should now be prepared to support an essential minimum of what is best in the arts, to consolidate successful ventures and to foster long-term planning'.<sup>114</sup> Labour took a very similar view in its official policy statement. It noted that public support for the arts should not be an issue of party politics. But it emphasised 'a real difference between the general attitude and practical conduct of the two parties when in office.'<sup>115</sup> The reluctance of Conservatives to increase grants was characterised as 'a death-bed response



rather than a considered attempt to meet the needs of the arts as a whole.'<sup>116</sup> It put forward the case for coherent long-term policy, with strong financial support from the state. The Conservative pamphlet emphasised business patronage, which would help check the tendency for excessive state control.<sup>117</sup> Labour, meanwhile, though welcoming such patronage, saw two dangers in it. It would depend on 'the fortunes of commerce' and thus be unstable; and the allocations of subsidy might be highly selective, and thus unfair.<sup>118</sup> The money starved Arts Council welcomed any patronage. W. E. Williams, its Secretary General, welcomed financial support from the independent television companies, calling it 'the third force of patronage', in addition to the state, municipal, industrial and private patronage.<sup>119</sup>

In its election manifesto, Labour promised two things. Grants to the Arts Council were to be increased by £4 million a year, a huge increase. Secondly, it promised the establishment of a National Theatre, a facility that had been talked about but not realised over the previous decade.<sup>120</sup> The Conservatives promised simply that: 'we shall do more to support the arts including the living theatre. Improvement will be made in museums and galleries and in the public library service. Particular attention will be given to the needs of provincial centres.'<sup>121</sup>

How far did the Conservative Government realise these election promises after the third successive election victory? In early 1960, Sir Edward Boyle, Financial Secretary to the Treasury announced an increase in government grants to the arts: the Arts Council would get

about £1.5 million, which was a 23 per cent increase on the previous year.<sup>122</sup> He spoke of more provincial tours by opera and ballet companies, and more aid to provincial repertory theatres. These statements were much welcomed in the press. The *Guardian* reported that: 'culture ... can expect to share in Tory prosperity.'<sup>123</sup> The headline in the *Birmingham Post* was 'Government boost for arts in provinces'.<sup>124</sup> The *News Chronicle* observed that the Government had become more 'imaginative' in its art policy.<sup>125</sup> However, no substantial changes were made in relation to policy matters and administrative structures. The alternative systems to government annual subsidy, such as long term block grants, advocated by both the Arts Council and the Bridge report, were ignored.<sup>126</sup> No effective administrative machinery for handling the whole issue of arts grants was created. Nevertheless, the statement made by the Financial Secretary was an encouraging sign that at least the Conservative Government recognised the necessity of state sponsorship to the arts.

### Financing sport

Government support for sport had a similar history to that for the arts. Up to the middle of the 1950s, sport was discussed in Parliament only in the context of the entertainments duty. However, in the second half of the decade, demands for expanded public support for sport became a parliamentary issue, and was increasingly discussed along with other questions of leisure such as the arts and youth service.

In 1954, a short debate took place in the House of Commons on Government assistance for sports facilities. The background was a worry about the slump of British sport on the international scene. At the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games, in which British participants had no financial support from the government, Britain won only one gold medal.<sup>127</sup> The English association football team had also experienced some traumatic defeats, firstly by United States in 1950, then both at home and away by the Hungarians in 1953-54. Ellis Smith, a Labour MP, quoted the words of the Hungarian captain in his introductory speech in the Commons:

I will tell you what is wrong with English football. I saw it at Wembley and at Budapest. You have not yet learned from your experience. You stick to the conventions of 25 years ago. The English experts have ignored the enormous progress made on the Continent.<sup>128</sup>

Smith demanded modernisation and reorganisation of both central and local government arrangements for encouraging British sport. A lack of adequate state finance, he argued, could be remedied by money from the football pools:

Germany and Italy, who lost the last war, are now providing more encouragement for physical fitness than is provided in this country. Italy deducts £4 million annually for sport from the pools. We take £4 million out of sport [as entertainments tax]. The Germans take £125,000 a week from the pools for the encouragement of sport, while we allow millionaires to be made out of pools and out of sport.<sup>129</sup>

Lack of proper sport facilities inside and outside schools was emphasised. In the same year, the Birmingham University Physical Education Department published its survey finding

that England and Wales had only 47 public and 83 private cinder athletic tracks, compared with 800 in Sweden and 500 in Finland.<sup>130</sup> More organised training, starting at a younger age, was also demanded. The Parliamentary Secretary to the MoE replied with the words spoken by Attlee when he was Prime Minister: 'His [Minister of Education] first objective, however, is the development to the full of each person's physical potentialities and not the fostering of success at competitive games'.<sup>131</sup> As to state financial assistance, the Parliamentary Secretary would not accept the demand for an increase on grounds of the continued need for economy.

As we have already seen in relation to the provision of playing fields, various voluntary bodies in physical training and sport repeatedly asked for a relaxation of government restriction on building and modernising sports facilities. The TUC sent a resolution in 1956 which demanded greater and more efficient state back-up for sports.<sup>132</sup> The Government did not feel any necessity of changing its existing arrangements. It was just before the 1959 general election that a renewed demand for state sponsorship for sports became a political issue. Labour intended to make an issue of leisure including sport. A few Conservative members were alarmed, including Party Chairman, Viscount Hailsham. Although Heathcoat-Amory maintained that existing arrangements were adequate, Hailsham suggested the establishment of a national council for the development of sport to strengthen British sportsmen and women of national importance.<sup>133</sup> The Conservative Party issued an unofficial

pamphlet which included a promise to establish a Sports Council, on the analogy of the Arts Council, and provide financial support to national teams participating in international sports events.<sup>134</sup> The Tory election manifesto, however, only promised 'more playing fields and better facilities for sport'.<sup>135</sup> Labour proposed the establishment of the Sports Council officially, with £5 million of public money.<sup>136</sup> Both Parties rejected the idea of a Ministry of Sport.

The Conservative Government certainly restored the level of grants to sport before the election, then increased it substantially in the election year.<sup>137</sup> The Government intended to use the opportunity of the Wolfenden Report to make a forward movement in the field of sport and leisure.<sup>138</sup> Although the government set up the inter-departmental working party on sport and physical recreation, as it was for the arts, so for sport, no major structural change was to be made.<sup>139</sup> One of the Wolfenden Report's main proposals, the establishment of a Sports Development Council, was shelved.<sup>140</sup>

### **Betting**

Unlike their aggressive policy towards the question of commercial television, Conservative governments kept quiet over the question of gambling after the publication of the Report by the Royal Commission on Betting, Lotteries and Gaming in 1951. The question was never debated until 1954 when Frederick Mulley, Labour MP for the Park division of Sheffield, introduced the Pool Betting Bill as a Private

Member. The Bill was designed to implement one of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission: each football betting promoter would be required to register with a local authority, and should publish annual accounts as well as weekly statements which showed the amounts deducted for expenses and commission.

Mulley called his Bill 'The Pool Investor's Charter', by which the punter would get 'a square deal'.<sup>141</sup> There was no intention of opposing pool's betting itself or reducing people's participation in it. A Gallup Poll showed the popularity of the Bill: among those who went in for football pools, 66 per cent considered that compulsory disclosure of the promoter's account was a 'good thing', against 22 per cent who considered it a 'bad thing'.<sup>142</sup> The procedure followed the 1934 legislation for betting on greyhounds which had worked satisfactorily. The Bill was largely non-controversial. Although there was opposition to a clause for the provision relating to ready money betting by post on football pools, only six members voted against this clause, against 69 who supported it.<sup>143</sup>

The Small Lotteries and Gaming Act, 1956, was more controversial. It was introduced in 1955, again in the form of a Private Member's Bill by another Labour Member, Ernest Davies. However, it was not a party matter. The Conservatives had initiated it following a resolution passed at their Conference in 1954. This had demanded the speedy implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the 1951 Royal Commission on Betting, as well as a relaxation of the conduct of private lotteries and sweepstakes.<sup>144</sup> As a

result, Anthony Barber, Conservative MP for Doncaster, introduced a lottery Bill similar to that of Davies, but could not find enough parliamentary time. It was reported, after this, that 30 MPs of all parties agreed that the Government should be pressed for a debate on the 1951 Royal Commission Report on Betting.<sup>145</sup> It was also agreed that a Bill should be introduced to ease the restrictions over conducting lotteries.

After two High Court decisions at the end of 1954, which ruled that weekly lotteries conducted by football supporter's clubs were illegal,<sup>146</sup> a relaxation of the law was felt to be more urgent than ever. It was Ernest Davies who was fortunate in the ballot, and thus his Bill reached a second reading in late 1955. The main purpose of the Bill was to remove defects in the law in order that charitable, sporting, cultural societies and clubs could conduct fund raising activities without any fear of prosecution.<sup>147</sup> Ironically, while many individuals were starting to enjoy increased affluence, many local societies, clubs and churches were experiencing more financial difficulty than ever. The Bill was accepted primarily as a necessary measure to help non-profit making societies and clubs to survive, rather than to promote people's pleasure. Games of chance or chance and skill combined, such as a whist drive, which were played for one stake not exceeding five shillings, were also legalised for the purpose of fund raising.

Thus, by 1956, two separate acts on gambling had passed through Parliament. But the major and the most controversial recommendation by the 1951 Royal Commission on Betting,

Lotteries and Gaming, the establishment of licensed offices to run cash betting off the course, remained untouched. The Conservative Government recognised from the first that there was no alternative but to implement this recommendation. Anticipating a possible parliamentary debate on the Royal Commission Report, the Secretary to the Home Office submitted memorandum to the Cabinet in 1953:

... the Government spokesman would have to intervene to say that the present law on off-the-course betting was admitted to be unenforceable, a danger to the honesty of the police, and in need of amendment: that the only solution was the provision of legal facilities for cash betting, subject to a strict system of control.<sup>148</sup>

Corruption of the police force especially worried the Home Office. In early 1954, the Home Secretary ruled that two officers of the Leeds City Police who had accepted money from street bookmakers should resign.<sup>149</sup> The Secretary reported to the Cabinet that the Leeds police force had become 'seriously corrupted through the prevalence of illegal betting in the city'.<sup>150</sup> Although the Cabinet agreed to seek ways to introduce legislation as a non-controversial issue,<sup>151</sup> it was only in 1956 that the Government promised to amend and consolidate the gambling laws.

This promise was made during the first parliamentary debate on the Report by the Royal Commission in April 1956, which was led by Lord Silkin.<sup>152</sup> Almost all the speakers, including Silkin himself, expressed their disapproval of gambling. They agreed, however, that the present laws were illogical and unenforceable, and ought to be amended.



Shortly after that, during the third reading of the Small Lotteries and Gaming Bill, the Government again promised a comprehensive review of all the gambling laws.<sup>153</sup> However, during the following few years, it did not feel that it had sufficient support on the subject from various interested parties,<sup>154</sup> notably the Churches' Committee on Gambling and racing organisers.

The Labour Party promised in its election manifesto in 1959 that anomalies in the betting laws would be removed, as a part of promoting personal liberty.<sup>155</sup> It was after the election that R. A. Butler, the Home Secretary, introduced the Betting and Gaming Bill. Butler explained its aim:

... the aim of the Government has been to liberalise a branch of the law which over the course of years, has become outmoded and ineffective and, therefore, treated by many people with ridicule and contempt. We hope that the Bill ... will provide reasonable freedom for people who wish to bet or to play games for money to do so, while, at the same time, retaining sufficient safeguards to act as deterrents against their being led into excess.<sup>156</sup>

The Act was not a whole-hearted recognition of gambling as a leisure pursuit. Many MPs certainly did not think that gambling itself was a justifiable cause. As Mark Clapson points out, the legalisation of off-course cash betting was a product of 'qualified liberation'.<sup>157</sup>

### 'Leisure in our affluent age'

In the first half of the 1950s, the Conservative government was largely indifferent to the question of leisure. The government's financial support of various facilities and

organisations were closely related to the financial situation of the Exchequer in any particular year. Until the very late 1950s, most government expenditure on leisure was periodically cut, restricted or discouraged. There was no government initiative to form any long term or coherent policy to provide leisure facilities or to encourage people's leisure activities.

However, by the time that the Government succeeded in introducing commercial television broadcasting, the post-war pattern of people's life styles, including people's spare time habits, was apparently changing. So-called 'traditional' leisure activities such as cinema-going and spectator sports were declining. The government felt these social changes through the changing level of annual revenue from the entertainments tax. The old structure of the tax was no longer sustainable by 1957, when the old one was abolished, save on cinema, and the new television tax was introduced.

The question of leisure became a political issue towards the end of the 1950s. Affluence, changing patterns of people's leisure, the 'bulge' of young people, the poor performance of British sportsmen and women on the international stage, all gradually accumulated and made it seem that the existing arrangements and provision for arts, sports and further education were inadequate and out of date. Insufficient state support for various organisations working in the field of leisure was increasingly exposed. Harold Macmillan was eager to take a line on art and sport in the Conservative election manifesto of 1959.<sup>158</sup> In the

general election campaign of 1959, significantly, both parties chose leisure as an election issue, although while Labour Party published *Leisure for Living* as an official policy statement, the Conservative's pamphlet *Challenge of Leisure* was written by the liberal minded Bow Group, and was never endorsed officially.

As the social and political pressure mounted, the returning Conservative government had no alternative but to start to review the whole question of leisure. By the beginning of the 1960s, quite a few recommendations were already made as to the future reorganisation of government administration across the field of leisure, such as arts, sports and youth services. However, apart from increasing annual financial support, few changes were made in policy matters or administrative machinery.

There was one abortive attempt to establish a new modernised policy for leisure, at Cabinet level. David Eccles, the Minister of Education, wanted to have emergency departmental power for the whole field of leisure. He sent a memorandum titled 'Leisure in Our Affluent Age' to the Prime Minister just before Christmas in 1959.<sup>159</sup> Macmillan agreed with this idea.<sup>160</sup> However, the officials in other departments, particularly the Treasury, were alarmed that this would lead to the creation of a Ministry of Culture, and resisted the proposal.<sup>161</sup> Certainly, as a parliamentary debate on 'problems and opportunities of leisure' revealed, there was a good deal of consensus that the role of the state should be limited to the provision of facilities.<sup>162</sup>

It was not until the following Labour Government that more radical measures were taken.

### Notes to Chapter 3

- 1 The name of the responsible Ministry for the question of town and country planning and national parks changed twice, from the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, to the Ministry of Local Government and Planning, and then to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.
- 2 On the hostile attitudes of these local authorities', see, G. E. Cherry, *Environmental Planning 1939-1969*, vol. II: *National Parks and Recreation in the Countryside* (1975), pp. 109-113; T. Stephenson, 'Parks for the Nation', *Fabian Journal*, no. 13 (July 1954), pp. 11-15.
- 3 Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), pp. 116-17; Stephenson, 'Parks for the Nation', p. 16.
- 4 *HL Debs*, vol. 217, col. 578, 1 July 1959.
- 5 Quoted in Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), p. 117.
- 6 *HL Debs*, vol. 217, col. 569, 1 July 1959. But none of which had been completely available to the public. Many of the definitive maps of local public footpaths had not yet been published: Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), p. 117.
- 7 See, Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), pp. 113-15. See, also *HL Debs*, vol. 230, cols. 604-23 and 625-80.
- 8 Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), p. 120.
- 9 *HC Debs*, vol. 598, cols. 1473-92, 30 January 1959.
- 10 *HC Debs*, vol. 230, col. 676, 19 April 1961.
- 11 *HC Debs*, vol. 572, cols. 777-79, 1 July 1957.
- 12 *HC Debs*, vol. 572, col. 820, 1 July 1957.
- 13 *HC Debs*, vol. 517, col. 763, 3 July 1953.
- 14 See, R. M. Stuttard, *Town and Country: The Amenity Question* (1959), p. 27; Cherry, *Environmental Planning* (1975), p. 117. See also, H. Newby, *Green and Pleasant Land? Social Change in Rural England* (1979), p. 237.
- 15 He pointed out that four racing tracks had closed down and that a further six would do so: *HC Debs*, vol. 488, cols. 2543-45, 14 June 1951.
- 16 He argued that speedway racing took place only with standardised engines and tyres, thus the success of the race depended entirely on human skill much as other racing and sport; and unlike motorcycling and motor-car racing, speedway was not subsidised by the trade, and it was not a gambling sport: *HC Debs*, vol. 488, cols. 2545-48, 14 June 1951.
- 17 Richard Crossman, a Labour MP for Coventry East, was among the supporters of the amendment. He had a share in the Coventry Speedway track. See, *HC Debs*, vol. 488, col. 2562, 14 June 1951.
- 18 *HC Debs*, vol. 488, cols. 2573-74, 14 June 1951.
- 19 *HC Debs*, vol. 497, cols. 1293-94, 11 March 1952.
- 20 See the Chancellor's statement, *HC Debs*, vol. 500, col. 280, 6 May 1952.
- 21 *HC Debs*, vol. 500, cols. 199-283, 6 May 1952. The debate on this amendment lasted more than four hours.
- 22 *HC Debs*, vol. 500, col. 281, 6 May 1952.
- 23 *HC Debs*, vol. 502, cols. 1271-302, 6 May 1952.

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- 24 *HC Debs*, vol. 500, cols. 218-19, 6 May 1952.
  - 25 *HC Debs*, vol. 500, col. 229, 6 May 1952.
  - 26 *HC Debs*, vol. 500, col. 249, 6 May 1952.
  - 27 *HC Debs*, vol. 500, col. 267, 6 May 1952.
  - 28 *HC Debs*, vol. 514, col. 55, 14 April 1953.
  - 29 It took two days to debate the issue. *HC Debs*, vol. 515, cols. 1963-2034 and 2089-212, 19 May 1953.
  - 30 A Conservative member argued that all the reasons, except that of financial difficulty, given by the Chancellor in favour of cricket was wrong. See the speech made by W. F. Deeds, in *HC Debs*, vol. 515, cols. 2014-16, 19 May 1953. See also a similar statement from another Conservative member, in *HC Debs*, vol. 515, col. 2100, 20 May 1953.
  - 31 *HC Debs*, vol. 527, cols. 1922-2022, 18 May 1954.
  - 32 *HC Debs*, vol. 555, col. 180, 25 June 1956 and cols. 373-76, 26 June 1956.
  - 33 *HC Debs*, vol. 568, cols. 988-90, 9 April 1957.
  - 34 See, General Statistical Office, *Monthly Digest of Statistics* (various issues).
  - 35 See, *HC Debs*, vol. 500, cols. 287-309, 6 May 1952 and vol. 502, cols. 1233-70, 18 June 1952. It was estimated that the concession would cost the Treasury only £200,000.
  - 36 *HC Debs*, vol. 516, cols. 1575-81, 22 June 1953.
  - 37 *HC Debs*, vol. 526, cols. 221, 6 April 1954.
  - 38 *HC Debs*, vol. 528, col. 260, 25 May 1954.
  - 39 *HC Debs*, vol. 554, cols. 1339-40, 19 June 1956.
  - 40 It was Tom O'Brien (Nottingham, North), who represented the trade union members in the film industry: *HC Debs*, vol. 516, col. 1542, 22 June 1953.
  - 41 *HC Debs*, vol. 568, cols. 988-990, 9 April 1957.
  - 42 *HC Debs*, vol. 586, cols. 68-69, 15 April 1958.
  - 43 *HC Debs*, vol. 608, cols. 1130-62, 7 July 1959.
  - 44 The Labour Party, *Britain Belongs to You* (1959), p. 2.
  - 45 *HD Debs*, vol. 570, cols. 1125-26, 21 May 1957.
  - 46 *HC Debs*, vol. 586, cols. 68-69, 15 April 1958.
  - 47 See speech made by Douglas Glover, *HC Debs*, vol. 606, cols. 1126-27, 10 June 1959.
  - 48 *HC Debs*, vol. 589, col. 434, 12 June 1958.
  - 49 See, M. Dickson and S. Street, *Cinema and State* (1985), pp. 233-39; PEP, 'The British Film Industry 1958', *Planning*, vol. XXIV, no. 424 (June 1958), pp. 156-57.
  - 50 *HC Debs*, vol. 612, col. 1218, 5 November 1959.
  - 51 See, *HC Debs*, vol. 616, cols. 79-86, 26 February 1960.
  - 52 *HC Debs*, vol. 612, cols. 1218-19, 5 November 1959.
  - 53 *HC Debs*, vol. 603, col. 1268, 16 April 1959.
  - 54 On the debate on the Labour's Licensing Bill, see, *HC Debs*, vol. 459, cols. 1028-146, 14 December 1948; vol. 464, cols. 1666-802, 10 May 1949; vol. 465, cols. 267-346, 17 May 1949.
  - 55 *HC Debs*, vol. 505, col. 96, 14 October 1952.
  - 56 Cmd. 8550, *Broadcasting: Memorandum on the Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949* (1952).
  - 57 *Ibid*, p. 3.

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- 58 A. Briggs, *Sound and Vision. The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. IV (1979), p. 439.
  - 59 Ibid., p. 440.
  - 60 Ibid., p. 441.
  - 61 Ibid., p. 888.
  - 62 Ibid., pp. 896-97.
  - 63 PRO, PREM 11/337, letter to Harold Macmillan, June 1953.
  - 64 Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), pp. 896-97.
  - 65 PRO, PREM 11/337, letter from Churchill to Viscount Woolton, 11 August 1953.
  - 66 PRO, PREM 11/337, reply from Woolton to Churchill, 13 August 1953.
  - 67 40% of Labour supporters favoured the introduction of commercial television, against 36% of Conservatives and 37% of Liberals: quoted in Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), p. 898.
  - 68 Cmd. 9005, *Broadcasting Memorandum on Television Policy* (1953).
  - 69 Ibid., p. 4.
  - 70 Ibid., p. 924.
  - 71 Ibid., p. 930-31.
  - 72 The Labour Party, *Speakers' Handbook 1954* (1954), pp. 218-24. See also, The Labour Party, *Challenge to Britain: A Programme of Action for the Next Labour Government* (1953), p. 25, which had a more combative tone: 'We will also resolutely oppose the introduction of commercial TV...'.  
 73 The Labour Party, *Personal Freedom: Labour's Policy for the Individual and Society* (1956), p. 13.
  - 74 B. Sendall, *Independent Television in Britain*, vol. 1, *Origin and Foundation 1946-62* (1982), p. 371.
  - 75 On the post monopoly era, see, A. Briggs, *The BBC: the First Fifty Years* (1985), chapter VI.
  - 76 PRO, CB 3/175, a memorandum prepared by the General Secretary of the National Playing Fields Association, 'No. of schemes assisted by NPFA Grants - playing fields and playing grounds', January 1954.
  - 77 PRO, CB 3/175, memorandum for meeting with the MoE on 9 February 1952.
  - 78 Ibid.
  - 79 Minute note of the MoE meeting with the deputation from the National Playing fields Association, the National Federation of Community Association and others, and the Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government [1952].
  - 80 MoE, Circular no. 283, 'Education Building', 3 December 1954.
  - 81 PRO, ED 169/1, letter from the Secretary of the National Federation of Community Associations, to MoE, 2 September 1953.
  - 82 The National Playing Fields Association, *Annual Report and Accounts 1955*, p. 20.
  - 83 See, Table A in the Appendix.
  - 84 Cmd. 929, *The Youth Service in England and Wales* (1960), pp. 92-93.

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- 85 See, Table B in the Appendix.
- 86 This is quoted in Lord Aberdare, *The Youth Service is in Grave Danger* (1957), p. 5.
- 87 *HC Debs*, vol. 544, col. 1320, 28 July 1955.
- 88 See, *HC Debs*, vol. 563, cols. 636-38, 25 January 1957.
- 89 *HC Debs*, vol. 569, col. 353, 2 May 1957.
- 90 *Seventh Report from the Select Committee on Estimates, Session 1956-57, 'The Youth Employment Service and Youth Service Grants'* (1957), pp. viii and x.
- 91 *HC Debs*, vol. 582, cols. 1372-73, 20 February 1958.
- 92 PRO, T 227/698, letter D. M. Nenck, MoE, to F. F. Turnbull, the Treasury, 11 April 1958.
- 93 The safeguard was that: 'embarrassing recommendations for increased expenditure might be avoided by a careful selection and briefing of the chairman and by terms of reference which, while not spoiling of the presentational advantage by being unduly restrictive, would make it clear that the object was to secure the best value for money rather than any substantial increase in the total amount to be spent': PRO, T 227/698, extract from H. A. (58) 11th Meeting Minutes, 20 June 1958.
- 94 Cmnd. 929, *The Youth Service in England and Wales* (1960), p. 5.
- 95 *HC Debs*, vol. 612, cols. 176-77, 27 October 1959; 289-92, 28 October 1959; and 540-636, 30 October 1959.
- 96 Cmnd. 929, pp. 38-41.
- 97 The first full account of the progress made since the publication of the Albemarle Committee report can be found in Cmnd. 1439, *Education in 1960* (1961), pp. 60-63.
- 98 MoE, *Building Bulletin*, 'Youth Service Buildings: General Mixed Clubs', no. 20 (September 1961).
- 99 MoE, *Community Centres* (1945).
- 100 PRO, ED 169/27, draft speech by Mr. A. A. Part, Deputy Secretary, MoE, at the London and Home Counties and South-Eastern area conference of the National Federation of Community Associations, 22 October 1960.
- 101 PRO, ED 169/27, minute from P. W[ilson] to Mr. Slater Davis and Mr. A. A. Part, 2 December 1960.
- 102 See various minutes in the file, PRO ED 169/27.
- 103 J. S. Harris, *Government Patronage of the Arts in Great Britain* (1970), pp. 157-62.
- 104 The Arts Council, *The Eleventh Annual Report 1955-1956* (1956), p. 18.
- 105 *Manchester Guardian*, 18 June 1959.
- 106 The Arts Council, *The Eleventh Annual Report* (1956), p. 31.
- 107 The Arts Council, *Housing the Arts in Great Britain: Part I, The Needs of the Metropolis* (1959).
- 108 *Ibid.*, pp. vii - viii. They were the Royal Festival Hall in London, the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry and the Mermaid Theatre in the City of London.
- 109 *Help for the Arts: a Report to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* (1959). This report was financed by the Gulbenkian Foundation, which was distributing money in the United Kingdom and other countries. The amount of



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- money totalled five or six million pounds a year, equivalent to a five per cent of oil royalty from the Iraq Petroleum Company.
- 110 *HC Debs*, vol. 598, cols. 613 and 631, 23 January 1959.
  - 111 *News Chronicle*, 17 March 1959.
  - 112 PRO, T 218/165, letter, Sir Hamilton Kerr to Viscount Hailsham, Chairman of the Conservative Party, 10 April 1959.
  - 113 PRO, T 218/165, letter to Viscount Hailsham, 5 May 1959.
  - 114 The Conservative Political Centre, *The Challenge of Leisure* (1959), p. 14.
  - 115 The Labour Party, *Leisure for Living* (1959), p. 12.
  - 116 *Ibid.*
  - 117 The Conservative Political Centre, *The Challenge of Leisure* (1959), p. 17; The importance of business patronage was more fully discussed in a thick Bow Group pamphlet, *Patronage and the Arts* (1959), which was written by a young administrator in the architects department of the London County Council, P. Brewster, and a young marketing specialist in a London advertising company, R. Carless.
  - 118 The Labour Party, *Leisure for Living* (1959), p. 15.
  - 119 The Arts Council, *Thirteenth Annual Report 1957-58* (1958), pp. 5-13.
  - 120 The Labour Party, *Britain Belongs to You* (1959), p. 2.
  - 121 The Conservative and Unionist Party, *The Next five Years* (1959).
  - 122 *HC Debs*, vol. 618, cols. 776-88, 26 February 1960.
  - 123 *Guardian*, 27 February 1960.
  - 124 *Birmingham Post*, 27 February 1960.
  - 125 *News Chronicle*, 27 February 1960.
  - 126 The Arts Council of Great Britain, *Twelfth Annual Report 1956-57* (1957), p. 6.
  - 127 R. McWhirter, *The Olympics 1896-1972. In Support of the British Olympic Appeal* (1972), p.60.
  - 128 *HC Debs*, vol. 531, col. 603, 28 July 1954.
  - 129 *HC Debs*, col. 608.
  - 130 T. Mason, *Sport in Britain* (1988), p. 80.
  - 131 *HC Debs*, vol. 531, cols. 625-26, 28 July 1954.
  - 132 MRC, MSS 292/807.12/4, extract from the Education Committee minutes, 13 November 1956.
  - 133 PRO, T 218/165, letter to Amory, 21 May 1959.
  - 134 The Conservative Political Centre, *The Challenge of Leisure* (1959), pp. 11-13.
  - 135 The Conservative and Unionist Party, *The Next Five Years* (1959).
  - 136 The Labour Party, *Leisure for Living* (1959), p. 42 and *Britain Belongs to You* (1959), p. 2.
  - 137 See, The Central Council of Physical Recreation, *Sport and the Community: The Report of the Wolfenden Committee on Sport* (1960), pp. 20-21.
  - 138 PRO, ED 169/73, draft memorandum for Home Affairs Committee, 19 October 1960.
  - 139 See the debate on the Wolfenden Committee Report on sport, *HC Debs*, vol. 639, cols. 828-63, 28 April 1961.

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- 140 PRO, CAB 128/36, C. C. (62) 65th Conclusions, i November 1962.
- 141 *New Statesman and Nation*, 20 February 1954, pp. 212-13.
- 142 PRO, PREM 11/3004, letter, R. J. Guppy, Home Office to P. G. Oates, Prime Minister's Office, 10 March 1954.
- 143 *HC Debs*, vol. 527, cols. 803-806, 7 May 1954.
- 144 *The Times*, 9 October 1954.
- 145 *The Times*, 17 November 1954.
- 146 See, *The Times*, 15 and 18 December 1954. Gloucester City Association F. C. Supporters' Club and Torquay United F. C. Supporters' Club were convicted.
- 147 See the debates in *HC Debs*, vol. 546, cols. 1803-71, 25 November 1955.
- 148 PRO, CAB 129/64, C. (53) 317, 13 November 1953.
- 149 *The Times*, 27 February 1954.
- 150 PRO, CAB 128/27, C. C. (54) 9th Conclusions, 17 February 1954.
- 151 PRO, CAB 128/27, C. C. (54) 11th Conclusions, 24 February 1954.
- 152 This debate was made possible after the publication of a letter from Mr. Henry Willink, Chairman of the 1951 Royal Commission on Betting, Lotteries and Gaming, questioning the five years' Government silence towards the Report. See, *HL Debs*, vol. 195, cols. 803-44, February 1956.
- 153 *HC Debs*, vol. 551, cols. 626, 13 April 1956.
- 154 *HL Debs*, vol. 200, col. 45, 7 November 1956; PRO, CAB 128/31, C. C. (57) 71, 7 October 1957.
- 155 *The Labour Party, Britain Belongs to You* (1959), p. 2.
- 156 *HC Debs*, vol. 613, col. 822, 16 November 1959.
- 157 M. Clapson, *A Bit of Flutter* (1992), p. 69.
- 158 PRO, T 218/58, Prime Minister's minute in the letter from Tim Bligh to G. Raymond Bell, 3 June 1959.
- 159 PRO, T 218/169, 'Leisure in Our Affluent Age', 23 December 1959. When he was President of the Board of Trade, Eccles suggested the creation of a Ministry of Works and Arts: PRO, T 218/58, minute to the Prime Minister, 6 July 1959.
- 160 PRO, PREM 11/2950, Prime Minister's office letter to D. H. Morell, MoE, 29 December 1959. Macmillan reportedly commented: 'I am all for tempting the teddy boys into the Geological Museum'.
- 161 See various memorandum exchanged in the file, PRO, T 218/169, 1959-60, 'Inter-Departmental Co-operation to Expand and Develop Spare-Time Cultural and Recreational Activities.'
- 162 *HL Debs*, vol. 221, cols. 655-744, 2 March 1960.

**PART II**  
**Case Studies**

## Chapter 4: Introduction - Coventry and Bolton

### Coventry

Coventry has a long history as an industrial town. In the middle of the 19th century, its main industry was silk ribbon weaving, followed by watch making, and then the cycle industry. In the 20th century, motor vehicles, aeroplanes, machine tools and electrical goods, increasingly dominated the industrial life of the city. This industrial boom made Coventry one of the fastest growing city in inter-war Britain. It was a city of workers and of the young. The percentage of skilled workers was high.<sup>1</sup> Politically, however, it took a long time for Labour to win majority popular support. In the 1935 General Election, the National candidate won the only parliamentary seat collecting 37,313 votes against Labour's 34,841.<sup>2</sup> Party membership barely reached a thousand, much lower than that of Bolton.<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1937 that Labour took control of the City Council.<sup>4</sup>

From the late 1930s, people's lives in Coventry were subject to the shadow of the Second World War. In particular, the high incomes earned by the skilled engineering workers in the munitions industries from the late 1930s had an important effect on people's leisure experiences. Jeremy Crump has concluded that the distinctive trends in leisure in 1930s Coventry were the high ownership of private cars, the superb sports and recreational facilities of the large firms, and the 'increasing scale, bigger cinemas, growing membership of social clubs, bigger

crowds at Highfield Road, reflecting larger, more regular incomes'.<sup>5</sup>

During wartime, however, people's leisure life became much more constrained in terms of time, space, facility and resources. There were many reasons for this. Long working hours, especially in munitions factories; a decline in membership of the various social, recreational and sports associations due mainly to the call up and evacuation; requisition of public places by the Government; prohibition of public gatherings under air raid precautions; destruction of cultural and amusement facilities by the Blitz; limited access to licensed premises and to both public and private transportation, because of the short supply of alcohol and fuel; and the blackout after dark.

Given these difficult conditions, both central and local government paid much attention to the issue of workers' spare time, particularly those who had been transferred to Coventry from elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Spare time in Coventry during the war largely remains to be explored. But it seems clear that Coventry people tried to make full use of what facilities and resources were available. Every amusement, recreational, sport, cultural, eating and drinking place that remained open seem to have been crowded, and every social occasion popular. Cinemas, dance halls, various recreational and social clubs, pubs, British Restaurants, public libraries and local day trip coaches, entertainments organised by the local Council during the summer holidays were all well patronised.

After the war, the local Council continued to be dominated by the Labour Party. Parliamentary seats too, were in Labour's hands until 1959 when one of the by then three seats (Coventry South) went Conservative by 1,830 votes.<sup>7</sup> The expansion of the city continued. The total population of Coventry expanded from 258,242 in 1951 to 305,521 in 1961.<sup>8</sup> On average, 3.3 persons per household lived in Coventry in 1951.<sup>9</sup> Despite the increase in population, in 1961, the number had decreased to 3.1.<sup>10</sup> The majority (53.7 per cent) of local households were owner occupiers in 1961.<sup>11</sup> As for social classes, the 1951 *Census* found that 86.8 per cent of the male working population were working class: skilled workers were 60.6 per cent; semi-skilled 15.1 per cent; and unskilled 11.1 per cent.<sup>12</sup> Even with a more sophisticated Census classification in 1961, 68.1 per cent of the total working population were in the manual working-classes.<sup>13</sup> About 37 per cent of adult women were in employment, of which just less than half were married women. The great majority of working married women (76 per cent) were full-time workers.<sup>14</sup> Although the proportion of married women increased to 56 per cent in 1961, the proportion of those who were in full time decreased to 60 per cent.<sup>15</sup>

Coventry remained dominated by engineering and the vehicles industry throughout the post-war period. In 1951, more than 61 per cent of the adult male population were found in these two industries.<sup>16</sup> Although the concentration of women workers was much less, about 39 per cent were in those two industries. In terms of occupation, 39.4 per cent of the total male population were manual workers working in

metal manufacturing and engineering.<sup>17</sup> In the case of women workers, the largest proportion (24.9 per cent) were in clerical work. Manual women workers in metal manufacturing and engineering comprised only 11.7 per cent of the total female work-force.<sup>18</sup> The industrial and occupational composition of Coventry had hardly changed by the beginning of the 1960s.<sup>19</sup> Unemployment rates stayed low during the fifties. In 1951, the figures were about 1.3 per cent for both male and female workers.<sup>20</sup> In 1961, the figures had increased about 60 per cent, becoming 2.1 for male and 2.0 for female, respectively.<sup>21</sup>

Probably, the most remarkable feature of post-war Coventry was its extraordinarily high wages among the factory workers. As C. Taylor, the district secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union pointed out in 1949:

Coventry workpeople did much better than most others in the country, and the wages of municipal skilled engineering workers, being fixed by nationwide joint industrial councils, were... considerably lower than the exceptionally high wages enjoyed by skilled workers in Coventry factories. A highly skilled municipal engineering worker receives 3s. 2.5d. an hour compared with the average skilled factory worker's wage of 4s. 6.5d. an hour.<sup>22</sup>

Production workers in the motor industry, in particular, enjoyed exceptionally high wages, even in comparison with those in other centres of car production. The following table shows how far the average earnings of workers in the Standard Motor Company, Coventry, had risen above the norm:

**Table 4:1 Average weekly earnings of motor vehicle workers, 1947-1953.<sup>23</sup>**

year	national average earnings, all industry (£. s. d.)	motor vehicle and cycle manufacturers (£. s. d.)	Standard Motor Co., Coventry (£. s. d.)
1947	5. 5.10.	6.10.11.	7.18. 9.
1948	5.15. 6.	7. 6. 3.	10. 9. 2.
1949	6. 0. 7.	7.18.10.	10.19.11.
1950	6. 6. 1.	8.10. 8.	12. 3. 9.
1951	6.18. 5.	8.19. 6.	12.16. 5.
1952	7. 9. 7.	9.13. 6.	12. 4. 4.
1953	7.18. 7.	10. 9.11.	15. 5. 6.

Though not as well off as Standard workers, skilled engineers in the locality certainly enjoyed the high level of earnings. In 1953, a skilled engineer on production in a Coventry factory earned 6s. 4.5d. per hour, on average. This meant that he would earn £14. 0s. 6d. for a 44 hours week.<sup>24</sup> Coventry engineering firms provided the highest wages in the region. In 1954, the average wage of patternmakers in local engineering firm was '36% higher than the national figure, 30% higher than Birmingham, and 44% higher than Leicester'.<sup>25</sup>

Workers in Coventry's textile industry, whose average earnings were much less than those in motor vehicles or engineering, also received more than their equivalents elsewhere. In 1953, at Courtaulds, the biggest rayon factory in Coventry, semi-skilled workers on production earned between £11 and £13 (224s. and 264s.) as a weekly average. It was also recognised by a district trade union secretary that there were a large number of labourers who earned from £9 to £11 (180s. to 220s.) per week at that time.<sup>26</sup> This



means that Coventry textile workers in the lowest occupational grades earned at least the national average wage for their industry.

Standard Motor workers continued to enjoy probably the highest level of wages of all. In 1959, the company offered 'a guaranteed minimum wage of £19. 11s. 8d. for Assembly Fitters and Painters, and £20. 11s. 11d. for Finishers and Trimmers, for a 42.5 hour week'.<sup>27</sup> A skilled worker's wages at GEC were £16. 15s. 0d., which was claimed to be the lowest in Coventry.<sup>28</sup> However, workers in machine tool factories were sometimes less fortunate in the late 1950s. The industry experienced a fall in orders, and started to make redundancies. In the very early 1960s, Wickmans' skilled and semi-skilled workers' wages for a 44 hours week were £13. 7s. 7d. and £12. 6s. 0d. respectively.<sup>29</sup> Their actual weekly earnings were probably no more than the national average of the industry.

There were great differences in wages according to occupational status. Coventry labourers' earnings were much lower than those of the skilled and semi-skilled, though they were still higher than those in the same category elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> Women and young workers too, earned much less than male workers and adult workers. This might be justified by reference to grades, hours or shifts of work, as the Alfred Herbert management claimed.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the differentials were remarkable. For example, at a machine tool factory in 1958, normal weekly wages for a male brazer, a skilled operative, were more than £13, while a female brazer got only £6. 5s. 1d.<sup>32</sup> At the end of the 1950s,

female production workers at Valves Ltd., a Clifford Motor Components company, earned only £7. 17s. 8d. as a weekly average, while male production workers received £12. 16s. 8d.<sup>33</sup> Lastly, workers in big factories would get more money than those in small factories. A national survey by the Ministry of Labour revealed that, while there were not very big differences in the machine tool industry according to the size of the firm, in motor vehicles and cycles, there was nearly a £5 difference in weekly earnings between the largest firm and the smallest.<sup>34</sup>

While undoubtedly most Coventry workers earned more than others elsewhere, there was a disadvantage. Coventry was a town with a higher cost of living, reflected in rents and prices for food and entertainment. The less skilled workers were, the more difficulties they must have felt in managing their households. A contemporary observer noted that it was not easy for Coventry workers to sustain 'affluence'. To make life more materially comfortable and keep up standards, it was necessary to work overtime, the night shift or at weekends.<sup>35</sup>

It was a fact that there was a substantial reduction in standard working hours in the later 1940s. Many agreements curtailing the working week occurred around 1947. In the 1950s, normal weekly hours were between 44 and 45 for five days a week at most major local factories.<sup>36</sup> For example, both at Courtaulds and at Daimler, normal weekly working hours were 44, concentrated in a five day week.<sup>37</sup> At the Standard Motor Company, further reduction was agreed, and in 1951 its normal working hours were 42.5.<sup>38</sup> No further

reductions were realised in the 1950s.<sup>39</sup> It was only in the early 1960s that further decreases were introduced,<sup>40</sup> when in both the engineering and motor vehicle industries, national normal weekly working hours fell from 44 to 42.<sup>41</sup>

Although normal working hours were reduced, actual working hours were not. Workers continued to work overtime. Many workers took the fruit of reduced normal working hours, not in terms of time but money. The table below shows a local example:

**Table 4:2 Average actual weekly working hours, the Standard Motor Company, 1947-1953.<sup>42</sup>**

year	number of hours
1947	42.1
48	42.1
49	40.6
50	42.1
51	42.0
52	40.0
53	45.7
54	44.5

Although actual working hours in Coventry were shorter than the national average, local working hours were not stable at all in the 1950s, but oscillated with the particular production needs of the industry.<sup>43</sup>

However, the number of days annual paid holiday for factory workers also gradually grew in the post-war period. In 1949, the majority of 22,000 Amalgamated Engineering Union members took 11 or 12 consecutive days, summer holidays with pay, which included August Bank Holiday Monday.<sup>44</sup> In the summer of 1951, while Rootes Group

employees had 11 consecutive days, the workers of Standard Motors had a fortnights holiday for the first time.<sup>45</sup> By 1953, many other local firms had followed the example set by Standard.<sup>46</sup> However, workers were not always allowed to take the leave as they liked. The management of Courtaulds demanded overtime work during the holiday period due to expanding order.<sup>47</sup> There was no increase in the length of annual paid holidays in the remaining years of the 1950s.

### Bolton

Victorian Bolton was dominated by cotton. Between the end of the 19th century and the First World War, the prosperity of the industry reached its peak. Conservatives dominated local politics. By 1887, 31 Conservative working-class clubs existed in Bolton with 3,200 members.<sup>48</sup> The local council was dominated by Conservatives with Liberal opposition, and Labour a small minority.<sup>49</sup> The culture and leisure worlds of the town in the late 19th century, the increase of commercialised forms of leisure have been well documented by historians.<sup>50</sup>

The period of cotton boom ended immediately following the First World War. In 1929, 58 per cent of the local labour force were still employed in the industry.<sup>51</sup> Bolton suffered badly in the great depression, though less than many other textile towns.<sup>52</sup> The employers of its relatively less depressed fine cotton spinning firms could offer more welfare facilities and services to its employees than those in other cotton towns.<sup>53</sup> The leisure worlds of local people in the 1930s seemed to be sustained as before, and in some

respects became even more rich and diverse. Jim Power noted that there was a simple formula in Bolton for the success of commercialised leisure such as picture going and dancing: success was ensured by providing 'basic, inexpensive and readily available pleasures'.<sup>54</sup>

After the cotton boom, there was a change in the climate of local politics. Many millowners left the town, and the political world of the local elites became less coherent being joined by the local shopkeepers and other self-made entrepreneurs.<sup>55</sup> However, there was no significant change in popular politics. Against the strong popular support for Conservatives and Liberals, there was no chance for Labour to win the parliamentary seats, although Party membership was greater than in Coventry.<sup>56</sup>

The Second World War was 'disastrous', because of both the shutting down of many mills and the growing competition of exports from India, Pakistan and Brazil.<sup>57</sup> In leisure, during the war, Boltonians experienced similar constraints as everywhere else caused by the requisitioning of entertainments places, the black out, the call up, restrictions on travel and so on. There were scarcely any damage to the entertainment, recreational and sport facilities in the locality, either municipal or commercial. This is one of the most basic differences between Coventry and Bolton.

In the post-war forties, power on the local Council shifted regularly between Labour and Conservative. At national level, Labour secured both parliamentary seats in 1945 and 1950. However, in the 1950s, Labour lost both

seats, being unable to overcome Conservative-Liberal election pacts.<sup>58</sup> Traditional working-class Toryism was still strong.<sup>59</sup> Economically, a certain revival of the local cotton industry was created by the Government export drive. However, it never regained the pre-war vitality, and one time during the serious cotton recession in 1952, 45 per cent of the labour force in the local cotton industry experienced unemployment.<sup>60</sup>

Contrary to the experience of Coventry, the total population of Bolton slightly decreased in the post-war years, from 167,167 in 1951 to 160,789 in 1961.<sup>61</sup> Between 1931 and 1958, Bolton lost population more than the national average, and in 1951 there were less young people and more over 65 than the national average.<sup>62</sup> While just over three persons per household lived in Bolton in 1951,<sup>63</sup> by 1961, the number had fallen to 2.8.<sup>64</sup> 57.5 per cent of the local households were owner occupiers,<sup>65</sup> higher than the figure for Coventry. As for social class, in 1951, 85.8 per cent of the male working population belonged to the working class: skilled workers were 56.7 per cent; semi-skilled 13.6 per cent; and unskilled 15.5 per cent.<sup>66</sup> In 1961, 64.8 per cent of the total working population were still manual workers.<sup>67</sup> Compared with Coventry, Bolton had fewer skilled and more unskilled workers. No less than 46 per cent of adult women were in employment, of which more than half were married women. And the great majority of working married women (79 per cent) were full-time.<sup>68</sup> The proportion of women in employment did not change in 1961. Although the proportion of married women increased to 60 per cent, the proportion of

those in full time work decreased to 62 per cent.<sup>69</sup>

Although there were more married women workers in 1961, many of them took part-time jobs, which as in Coventry. The overall rate of unemployment remained low, although it increased by about 80 per cent during the fifties. The 1951 *Census* recorded that the rate was 1.8 per cent among males and 1.0 per cent among females.<sup>70</sup> In 1961, the rate for males went up to 3.3 per cent, while the figure for females was 1.8 per cent.<sup>71</sup>

In 1951, the chief industry in Bolton was still textiles, though it was increasingly contracting. Of the adult male working population aged over 15 (50,624), nearly 24% were employed in the textile industry, and more than 70% of those were engaged in cotton spinning.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, out of the total female working population (35,807, of which 18,678 were married women), nearly half were employed in textiles, and again just over 70% of them were in cotton spinning. However, when we look at the occupational and status composition of the male work-force, more skilled and semi-skilled workers were engaged in metal and engineering (18.8 per cent) than in textiles (12.9 per cent).<sup>73</sup> As for women workers, however, by far the largest proportion remained in textiles (36.9 per cent).<sup>74</sup> The clothing industry was a possible alternative to the cotton industry among local female workers.<sup>75</sup>

Industrial composition changed by 1961. The *Census* of that year revealed that the proportion of adults employed in textiles dropped to 14.5 per cent of males and 35.4 per cent of females.<sup>76</sup> The industrial composition became more

diverse particularly among male workers. 8.9 per cent worked in the engineering and electrical goods industry; 9.8 per cent in the vehicle industry; and 11 per cent in the distributive trades. However, textiles remained the single largest industry and occupation for women workers. In total, textiles was still the dominant industry in the locality employing more than 23 per cent of the total adult population, although it became more difficult to identify Bolton as a cotton town.

There are no local figures available for hours of work and the amount of earnings in Bolton. The broad trends in the cotton industry, drawing on the national statistics supplied by the Ministry of Labour can be discovered.

**Table 4:3 Average weekly hours actually worked by manual workers in engineering and textiles, 1938-1960.<sup>77</sup>**

years	engineering, vehicles and others		textiles	
	men	women	men	women
1938	48.0	44.2	47.7	44.5
1944	52.3	45.7	50.9	45.6
45	49.2	43.4	50.0	44.5
46	47.8	42.4	48.4	43.8
47	45.9	41.1	46.8	42.5
48	46.2	41.3	44.9	42.5
49	45.9	41.6	47.2	42.1
50	46.8	41.9	47.8	42.3
51	47.5	41.7	47.6	42.1
52	47.5	41.7	46.1	40.5
53	47.7	42.1	48.2	42.4
54	48.3	42.3	48.0	42.2
55	48.6	42.2	48.3	41.7
56	48.0	41.7	48.0	41.5
57	47.8	41.9	48.1	41.5
58	47.2	41.5	47.1	40.9
59	47.8	42.2	48.3	41.6
60	46.6	40.5	48.1	41.2



Actual working hours in the cotton industry tended to increase, as in engineering and vehicles. Compared with the experiences of Coventry workers in the motor industry, both women and men, and both young and old in mills in Bolton worked slightly longer hours throughout the period. The length of annual holidays were a week and six public holidays until 1951, then two weeks plus six public holidays became in common.<sup>78</sup>

**Table 4:4 Average weekly earnings of the manual workers in engineering and textiles, 1938-1960.<sup>79</sup>**

years	engineering, vehicles and others				textiles			
	men (s. d.)		women (s. d.)		men (s. d.)		women (s. d.)	
1938	75	0	33	4	57	3	31	9
1944	140	6	71	4	99	9	54	8
45	132	1	69	9	102	6	55	6
46	127	8	67	3	107	2	60	8
47	137	5	72	5	116	5	66	10
48	148	7	78	3	127	4	74	2
49	151	3	84	5	135	3	78	9
50	158	8	87	4	144	6	83	5
51	172	4	93	7	159	6	93	8
52	188	5	103	8	163	6	93	6
53	201	8	111	5	180	9	104	3
54	217	6	118	9	192	7	109	9
55	238	9	127	7	203	7	114	4
56	253	4	134	6	214	6	120	3
57	263	7	140	9	227	10	128	4
58	273	7	148	4	230	6	130	6
59	288	6	156	6	243	5	137	3
60	322	4	153	3	262	5	145	2

On earnings, Bolton mill workers, who were 21 years old and over, both women and men, used to get less money than was earned by the Coventry motor workers. Although cotton remained the single largest industry in Bolton, there was a larger male employment in engineering and allied trades.

Given the fact that, in 1951 a market research exercise gave the same income level index to Bolton as Coventry, the extent that Bolton was less prosperous compared with Coventry should not be exaggerated.<sup>80</sup>

# Notes to Chapter 4

- 1 D. W. Thoms and T. Donnelly, 'Coventry's Industrial Economy, 1880-1980', in B. Lancaster and T. Mason (ed.), *Life and Labour in a Twentieth Century City: The Experience of Coventry* (Coventry, 1986), pp. 24-29.
- 2 The Labour Party, *Annual Report, 1935-36* (1936).
- 3 See, various *Annual Report* of the Labour Party.
- 4 On the rise of Labour in Coventry, see, F. Carr, 'Municipal Socialism: Labour's Rise to Power', in Lancaster and Mason, *Life and Labour* (1986), Chapter 6.
- 5 Jeremy Crump, 'Recreation in Coventry between the Wars', in Lancaster and Mason, *Life and Labour* (1986), p. 280. Highfield Road was the stadium for Coventry Football Club.
- 6 The following description is largely based on my M.A. thesis: Ichihashi, H., 'Leisure Policies for War Workers 1939-1945, with special reference to Coventry' (M.A. Thesis, University of Warwick, 1990).
- 7 The Labour Party, *Annual Report, 1958-59* (1959).
- 8 *Census 1961. England and Wales. County Report: Warwickshire* (1963), Table 3.
- 9 *Census 1951. England and Wales. County Report: Warwickshire* (1954), Table 3.
- 10 *Census 1961. England and Wales. County Report: Warwickshire* (1963), Table 3.
- 11 *Ibid*, Table 20.
- 12 *Census 1951. England and Wales. County Report: Warwickshire* (1954), Table 27.
- 13 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Occupation, Industry, Socio-Economic Groups: Warwickshire* (1966), Table 5.
- 14 *Census 1951. England and Wales. Occupational Tables* (1956), Table 20.
- 15 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Occupation, Industry, Socio-Economic Groups: Warwickshire* (1966), Table 1.
- 16 The figures in this paragraph were calculated based on *Census 1951. England and Wales. Industry Tables*, Table 2.
- 17 *Census 1951. England and Wales. Occupational Tables* (1956), Table A.
- 18 *Ibid*.
- 19 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Occupation, Industry, Socio-Economic Groups: Warwickshire* (1966), Table 2 and 3.
- 20 *Census 1951. England and Wales. Occupational Tables* (1956), Table 20.
- 21 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Occupation, Industry, Socio-Economic Groups: Warwickshire* (1966), Table 1.
- 22 CS, 30 April 1949.
- 23 MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/PER/WA/1, a list of earnings of motor vehicle Manufacturers, Appendix D to a memorandum 'Wage Structure', 22 April 1954. Both columns, 'national average earnings' and 'motor vehicle and cycle Manufacturers', were calculated by the employers based on the official statistics published in the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*.

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- 24 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN10, letter from J. L. Jones, district secretary, to Mr. T. H. Hodgson, national secretary of the TGWU, 22 October 1953.
  - 25 MRC, MSS.66/1/2/4, report of works conference, between United Patternmakers Association and the Coventry and District Engineering Employers' Association, 20 December 1954.
  - 26 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN10, letter from J. L. Jones, district secretary, to Mr. T. H. Hodgson, national secretary of the TGWU, 22 October 1953.
  - 27 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN10, a notice to employees in the Body Shop at Canley works, Standard Motor Company Ltd., 15 June 1959.
  - 28 MRC, MSS.66/1/2/5, report of works conference between AEU and CDEEA, at GEC, 14 December 1959.
  - 29 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN11, a memorandum, 'Rates paid to Brazers', January 1960.
  - 30 See, the list of local labourers' wages in 1953, in MRC, MSS.208B/TBN11, letter, District organiser to Mr. J. Price, TGWU, 20 March 1953. All figures are for a 44 hours week, except those of Standard Motor, which is for a 42.5 hours week.
  - 31 MRC, MSS.66/1/2/4, works conference between AEU and CDEEA, at Alfred Herbert Ltd., 15 March 1956.
  - 32 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN11, a list, 'Rates of Daywork Personnel', Wickmans Ltd., 21 February 1958.
  - 33 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN11, a list of average earnings of workers at Valves Ltd., Coventry, [July 1959].
  - 34 *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, April 1959, pp. 126-27.
  - 35 Turner, G., *The Car Makers* (revised Penguin edition, 1964), pp. 239-40. See also a newspaper report on workers who prefer night shift: *CET*, 26 April 1951.
  - 36 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN11, letter, District Organiser to Mr. J. Price, TGWU, 20 March 1953.
  - 37 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN10, letter, District Secretary to Mr. T. H. Hodgson, Secretary of TGWU, 22 October 1953; MRC, MSS.66/1/2/3/402, report on the works conference, 3 November 1954.
  - 38 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN10, a leaflet, 'Summary of agreements between the Standard Motor Company Ltd., the Confederation of shipbuilding and Engineering Union and the TGWU covering hourly paid employees', January 1951.
  - 39 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN11, list of average earnings of workers at Valves Ltd., Coventry, [July 1959].
  - 40 For example, at Wickmans, 42 hours replaced 44 hours in 1960: see, MRC, MSS.208B/TBN11, proceedings of local conference, 23 September 1960.
  - 41 *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, November 1961, pp. 445-47.
  - 42 MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/PER/WA/1, memorandum, 'Wage Structure', Appendix C, 22 April 1954.
  - 43 They also fluctuated to a great extent season by season, mainly according to the needs of production.
  - 44 *CS*, 6 August 1949.
  - 45 *CS*, 27 July 1951.
  - 46 S. Melman, *Decision-Making and Productivity* (Oxford, 1958), p. 71.

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- 47 MRC, MSS.208B/TBN10, letter, Deputy Chief Labour Officer, Courtaulds Ltd. to J. L. Jones, District Secretary, TGWU.
  - 48 J. K. Walton, *Lancashire. A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), p. 260.
  - 49 Ibid., pp. 278-79, 346-49; C. H. Saxelby (ed.), *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 80.
  - 50 R. Poole, *Popular Leisure and the Music Hall in Nineteenth Century Bolton* (Lancaster, 1982); P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England. Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (1987).
  - 51 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 111.
  - 52 In 1931, unemployment in Bolton among cotton workers was 14.6 per cent for males and 15.4 per cent for females, while corresponding figures for Lancashire were 24.4 and 28.4, respectively. See, Table 11.5 in M. Savage, 'Women and Work in the Lancashire Cotton Industry, 1890-1939', in J. A. Jowitt and A. J. McIvor (ed.), *Employers and Labour in the English Textile Industries, 1850-1939* (1988).
  - 53 S. Jones, 'Cotton Employers and Industrial Welfare between the Wars', in Jowitt and McIvor, *Employers and Labour* (1988), p. 68.
  - 54 J. Power, 'Aspects of Working Class Leisure during the Depression Years: Bolton in the 1930s', (unpublished MA Thesis, University of Warwick, 1980), p. 92.
  - 55 Walton, *Lancashire* (Manchester, 1987), p. 348.
  - 56 In 1935 General Election, Labour secured just over 40 per cent of the total votes. See, the Labour Party, *Annual Report, 1935-36* (1936).
  - 57 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 93.
  - 58 Bolton's percentage vote for Labour was below the national average, both in 1951 and 1955. See, C. A. Moser and W. Scott, *British Towns. A Statistical Study of Their Social and Economic Differences* (1961), Appendix B.
  - 59 See, A. Sykes, 'Bolton- A Town of Independent Man', *Time and Tide*, 14-20 March 1962, pp. 12-13.
  - 60 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 94.
  - 61 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Country Report: Lancashire* (1966), Table 3.
  - 62 Moser and Scott, *British Towns* (1961), Table 2 and Appendix B.
  - 63 *Census 1951. England and Wales. County Report: Lancashire* (1954), Table 3.
  - 64 *Census 1961. England and Wales. County Report: Lancashire* (1966), Table 3.
  - 65 Ibid, Table 20.
  - 66 *Census 1951. England and Wales. County Report: Lancashire* (1954), Table 27.
  - 67 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Occupation, Industry, Socio-Economic Groups: Lancashire* (1966), Table 5.
  - 68 *Census 1951. England and Wales. Occupational Tables* (1956), Table 20.
  - 69 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Occupation, Industry, Socio-Economic Groups: Lancashire* (1966), Table 1.

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- 70 *Census 1951. England and Wales. Occupational Tables* (1956), Table 20.
- 71 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Occupation, Industry, Socio-Economic Groups: Lancashire* (1966), Table 1.
- 72 The figures in this paragraph were calculated based on *Census 1951, England and Wales, Industry Tables*, Table 2.
- 73 *Census 1951. England and Wales. Occupational Tables* (1956), Table 20 and A.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Lancashire and Merseyside Industrial Development Association, *Lancashire and Merseyside* (1952), p. 28.
- 76 *Census 1961. England and Wales. Occupation, Industry, Socio-Economic Groups: Lancashire* (1966), Table 3.
- 77 Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1968* (1971), Table 43, 44 and 45. Before 1948, figures in the column, 'engineering, vehicles and others', was calculated based on a column classified as 'metal, engineering, and shipbuilding'. After 1948, the figures calculated based on two columns, 'engineering, shipbuilding and electrical goods' and 'vehicles', but the figures for 1960 was based on 'engineering and electrical goods' and 'vehicles'. 2) 'men' means those of 21 years old and over, while 'women' means those of 18 years old and over.
- 78 *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (December 1946), p. 344; (April 1951), p. 138; (May 1952), p. 158.
- 79 Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1968* (1971), Table 40, 41 and 42.
- 80 C. Chisholm (ed.), *Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom* (1951), pp. 126 and 156.

## Chapter 5: Municipal and Commercial Provision in Leisure, Coventry, 1945-51

The purpose of this chapter is to describe changes and continuity in local leisure provision and the people's reception of them. Firstly, the facilities and services provided by local government will be explored. The increasing interest and activity of local government in the leisure services are discussed. Finally, some major aspects and trends in the commercial leisure world will be examined.

### **1. Municipal Provision for Leisure**

Broadly speaking, there were two purposes in the post-war 'social' reconstruction plans of the Coventry City Council. One was to restore the pre-war standard of cultural, social and recreational amenities in a form more suitable to post-war local demands and tastes. This seemed natural and essential for a blitzed city. Secondly, there was another rather more ambitious task. Coventry had often been portrayed as a cultureless and pecuniary minded city.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it is little wonder that the reconstruction of social life and amenities was seen as an important aspect of local town planning.<sup>2</sup>

#### Open spaces and sports facilities

Coventry Council was conscious about the need for open spaces from the pre-war period. The Council determined to secure their Green Belt scheme, and during the war, it protested strongly against Government attempt to erect

shadow factories or war workers' hostels on those sites. In the post-war era, therefore, Coventry had relatively plenty of open spaces in and around the city.<sup>3</sup> However, playing fields and recreational grounds remained insufficient. There were few playing fields on the new housing estates.<sup>4</sup> The most urgent problem was a shortage of sports grounds. War Memorial Park, which was a focal point for sports men in pre-war Coventry, was still occupied by the military in 1946, and the Parks Superintendent predicted gloomily that even if restoration had started immediately, it would not be available for the public until the summer of 1948.<sup>5</sup> In early summer 1946, the Chairman of the Warwickshire War Agricultural Executive Committee desperately appealed to local farmers to make their lands available for sports enthusiasts.<sup>6</sup> In August 1948, even after the number of football pitches had doubled to 39 compared to pre-war, local amateur teams still experienced considerable difficulty in completing their fixtures.<sup>7</sup> Near the end of 1940s, the low standard of facilities also began to be seen as a problem. The lack of dressing rooms was claimed to be acute. The only municipal stadium in Coventry catering for football, athletics and cycle racing, the Butts Stadium, had been re-surfaced and terraced, and could accommodate 12,000 spectators. But it did not have any shelter against the rain. There were no catering facilities in the parks.

Swimming facilities were badly hit by the war, when Coventry lost its three public baths to enemy action. From 1941, the Baths and Parks Committee had asked for financial support from the Ministry of Health for reinstatement of one



of these. However, shortage of labour, needed for house building, compelled the Ministry to shelve the issue.<sup>8</sup> And it was 1946 before the first post-war public bath was opened at Foleshill.<sup>9</sup>

Sporting facilities remained in short supply during the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>10</sup> In season 1948-49, eight amateur football leagues with 67 teams were competing in Coventry for 35 municipal pitches, and a further 16 teams which had applied for league places could not be accepted.<sup>11</sup> A new scheme for the erection of a massive sports stadium and playing grounds near the city was proposed by the Council as early as 1946, but did not get any further during the period.<sup>12</sup> From the statistics of attendance at Foleshill public baths,<sup>13</sup> the popularity of swimming seems to have been growing steadily throughout the 1940s. Various clubs and schools held swimming galas, and water polo and squadron races were organised weekly during the season.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1950s, the situation remained unchanged. With two private pools open, only three swimming baths were available to the Coventry general public.<sup>15</sup>

Public provision of many sporting facilities tended to be for men only. Facilities for women, such as hockey and netball pitches, tended to be more neglected than those for men.<sup>16</sup> Even where sports grounds were open to both sexes, males usually outnumbered women. In 1948, the only municipal swimming pool at the Foleshill was used by men over two and a half times as frequently as by women.<sup>17</sup> Although there were mixed nights, women's nights and men's nights for swimming, more women went on their own nights than on mixed

nights. Mr. A. Sharples, Coventry Baths Superintendent suggested that this was due to disruptive behaviour of 'the "superior" male' who unconsciously thought that 'a mere women should not be allowed to swim a length without interruption'.<sup>18</sup>

### Libraries and museum

In the year before the war, Coventry had 10 public libraries and four evening centres.<sup>19</sup> The Central library also provided a meeting room for various cultural and study groups.<sup>20</sup> During the November Blitz in 1940, however, some '150,000 books, manuscripts, maps, prints and drawings, and all the essential stock records and other equipment' were destroyed. Except for its reference room, the Central Library was no longer available. Although people's demand for books increased steadily throughout the 1940s,<sup>21</sup> the re-establishment of the central library service took a long time. By March 1944, a post-war library development plan proposing a temporary central library was submitted to the Policy Advisory Committee of the Council who urged that it should be given priority.<sup>22</sup> However, the Ministry of Health turned down the City architect's plan as uneconomic.<sup>23</sup> It was abandoned in 1946.<sup>24</sup> In 1950, the temporary central library still remained in the Central Methodist Hall, with the original site the municipal staff canteen.<sup>25</sup> Even when the central library re-opened in June 1952, alterations and repairs were 'still far from being finished'.<sup>26</sup>

However, the municipal authority could develop its own library policy for its citizens. We can recognise the steady

increase of evening centres, as Table 5:1 illustrates. Some of these centres were allocated to community centres such as Pinley, Cheylesmore and Whitley. That the centres seemed to meet people's demands is illustrated by the number of books issued for home reading which increased from 33,928 in 1946-47 to 80,566 in 1948-49.<sup>27</sup> The growth of branch libraries had the same impact.

**Table 5:1 The number of branch libraries and evening centres in Coventry, 1943-1950.<sup>28</sup>**

Year	branch libraries	evening centres
1943-44	5	nil
44-45	5	2
45-46	5	3
46-47	5	5
47-48	5	5
48-49	5	6
49-50	7	7 (+ Gramophone Record Library)

In the autumn of 1949, a branch with a 'modern book shop atmosphere' opened at Radford.<sup>29</sup> In its first development plan under the 1947 Town Planning Act, Coventry Council could claim that local experience had 'shown that branch libraries with stocks varying from 20,000 to 25,000 books' were 'best able to cater for the diverse major interests of the average suburban population'.<sup>30</sup>

A survey made in the late forties found that, among the adult residents in the Stoke area where a municipal branch library and several commercial libraries existed, over 40 per cent used one or the other.<sup>31</sup> Although the municipal library was more popular and attracted more borrowers from

wider areas, private libraries were also well patronised by the residents, especially by those unable to travel far: the largest single group using commercial libraries were married women with young children.<sup>32</sup>

There was another 'progressive' aspect to Coventry library policies. In 1950, a Gramophone Records Library was opened with a collection of 1,050 records. It was soon popular much to the librarian's surprise.<sup>33</sup> Local library services were badly hampered by the national economic difficulties in this period, but Council had succeeded in developing their own plan, even if it was fairly modest.

The destiny of the city museum and the art gallery was similar to that of the central library. Before the Second World War, Coventry started to build a gallery and museum with a donation of £100,000 from Sir Alfred Herbert, the leading local industrialist. However, when only part of the basement had been built, the war started and the basement was converted to an air raid shelter.<sup>34</sup> After the war, the City Council decided that the original style of the gallery and museum was inappropriate to the new Coventry. A fresh start was planned, but the Council could not find the money source to meet the increased costs of the new building. In 1948 a full-time Museum Curator was appointed.<sup>35</sup> In 1950, however, the city museum was still in store because even the Charterhouse, the only building in the city dedicated to museum purposes, was still occupied by the Health Department. Although the Herbert Temporary Gallery was officially opened in 1949, it was in the original basement, which would eventually be demolished. Sir Alfred Herbert

described it as "this humble rabbit-warren".<sup>36</sup> It was only in the middle of the 1950s that work on a new museum and gallery started.

### Community centres

A serious attempt to re-orientate 'money minded' Coventry into a town of responsible citizens and of neighbourhood communities through the establishment of community centres, was gradually set in motion during the course of the war. The first systematic diagnosis of Coventry's social world was commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and submitted in 1943 as a war time social survey.<sup>37</sup> The survey not only examined the present shortage of various social and recreational facilities but offered recommendation on how to create a community-oriented local society by making use of existent facilities such as transferred workers' hostels and factory recreational facilities as community centres. In 1944, City Council received the sum of \$75,000 (£18,750) to meet the cost of building three community centres from the United States War Relief Fund, the money having been originally donated by American workers.<sup>38</sup> Without this donation, the community centres project would not have been able to develop so soon after 1945.

The newly established Community Centres Committee decided to allocate the three centres to the outer suburbs of the city, where these kind of facilities were lacking.<sup>39</sup> The first two centres were opened at the very end of the war. They were managed by their own community associations, and officially controlled by the Education Committee. It was

expected that they would be 'the home for organisations centred and working in the district and of individuals' and that they would 'give the neighbourhood a corporate voice'.<sup>40</sup>

At first, the response from the residents was very disappointing. Membership was small 114 at Pinley and 157 at Holbrook.<sup>41</sup> There was more interest in Bell Green. At the first public meeting there, 274 citizens turned up.<sup>42</sup> However, at the end of the first year, including about 200 pensioners as honorary members, Holbrook had 916 members, Pinley 520, and newly established Bell Green 416, with an average total attendance of 1,000 per week.<sup>43</sup>

Although the constituent organisation members were very limited and highly political, individual members, paying a subscription of 1s. per month, seem to have enjoyed the social occasions, refreshments and various club activities.<sup>44</sup> There were indoor games (bridge, chess, table tennis, darts, whist, old time dances, keep fit, photography), outdoor games (cricket, cycling, tennis, football, rugby), sewing, dress making and craft classes, women's clubs, and cultural groups (drama, choir, discussion, music).<sup>45</sup> During 1949, the Bell Green centre organised 1,529 activities.<sup>46</sup> The catering service of the centres was also popular. Holbrooks sold 27,067 cakes and sandwiches, and 16,293 hot drinks over the first six months.<sup>47</sup> During its first eleven months, Cheylesmore community centre could report the sale of 37,395 cups of tea (more than hundred a day), 4,157 sandwiches and 24,253 cakes and a profit of more than £400.<sup>48</sup>

Coventry Council was quite determined to increase the number of these community centres, because they were regarded as social and cultural focal points for 'responsible citizens'. In 1947, the Town Clerk sent a letter to the MoE asking that the local authority be permitted to exercise a compulsory land purchase order for securing a community centre site, next to the Holbrook area. The Ministry, however, refused to allow this, fearing the loss of 'a certain amount of good will' in the community.<sup>49</sup> At the beginning of 1949, Whitley community centre was established, though having to share their hut accommodation with a school. In 1951, the opening of Canley community centre brought the Coventry total to six.<sup>50</sup>

By the early 1950s it became apparent that only a small minority of local people were using these community centres. The City Council, looking back on its experiments in the 1940s rather bitterly, had to admit its failure to attract local people.

Attendance at the Bell Green, Holbrooks and Pinley Centres, soon after they were opened, was around the 1,000 mark. However, since that date there has been a reduction in the numbers who have enrolled as members, and the present membership is about 600 to 800. ... The peak attendance at the centres opened in 1945 was reached at an early stage, possibly owing to the lack of recreational activities, educational and cultural activities, and to the limited transport facilities, in the city at that period; with the gradual improvement of conditions there has been a perceptible decline in the interest in the centres. A new fall in membership has set in with the return of many women to industry.<sup>51</sup>

Comparing this with the experience of a local public house, the Dolphin Inn in Canley, where no community centre

existed, the achievement of the community centres was not impressive. While the inn could accommodate a local branch of the British Legion, the Old Age Pensioners' Association, the Canley Allotment Association, the Angling Association, the Canley Sick and Dividend Club and darts teams of both sexes,<sup>52</sup> no community centres could attract these kind of associations. The inn was rightly described in a local newspaper as acting 'as community centre'.<sup>53</sup>

The City Council was also ready to acknowledge that people's interests tended to be social, not cultural nor educational:

Lack of general interest in the centres is exhibited by appropriately 35% of the total members ... to the extent that they only attend occasional social activities, taking little part, if any, in the running of the centre and the cultural activities. ... Social features receive strong support, but to date, apart from the crafts and dancing groups, general support of cultural activities is rather tepid. ... Many at present use the centres to relieve conditions found in houses where overcrowding exists.

It is felt that community centres are developing more on the lines of clubs, although cultural activities are not being entirely forced into the background.<sup>54</sup>

In fact, the City Council recognised the importance of social clubs in the new residential suburbs. They approached the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, seeking advice on the siting of clubs. Eventually, 17 sites were allocated for the establishment of clubs in the post-war development plan.<sup>55</sup> A sociological survey conducted in Coventry between 1949 and 1951 revealed a good deal of difference between community centres and social clubs. The survey showed that among neighbourhood unit residents on outskirts of Coventry,



the community centre was much less popular than the social club. The survey made it clear that while members of the social club tended to live nearer to the club, those of the community centre did not. It also found that the community centre was for individual adults, with a strong presence of women, whose membership was twice as high as men's, while the social club was a place for men and the family. It further suggested that community centre members were in relatively higher occupation than club members. The survey summed up as follows: 'Our own conclusion is that the Social Club serves more of the functions of a community centre in the sense of providing channels for drawing together families in the immediate locality, than the Community Centre, which is an adult club with limited and more specialised interests.'<sup>56</sup>

### Service of youth

The LEA had been paying great attention to the welfare of young people. During the war, local machinery was consolidated for the post-war youth service. Most voluntary youth organisations were affiliated to the Coventry Federation of Youth Organisations. Apart from the Federation, constituted by adult representatives of local youth organisations, the Coventry Council of Youth was set up. This was a self-managed 'junior partner' of the Federation, and made its own suggestions for improving the municipal youth service. Both organisations sent their representatives to the Coventry Youth Committee, which was

an advisory committee to the LEA and considered all aspects of the local youth service.<sup>57</sup>

One year after the war, there were nine municipal youth centres which took care of young persons aged between 14 and 20.<sup>58</sup> Eight were using school premises claiming some 2,500 members,<sup>59</sup> a remarkable figure when we compare it with the situation just after the November blitz in 1940, when only 150 attended just one youth centre.<sup>60</sup> However, actual attendance was much lower.<sup>61</sup> Inspectors despatched from the MoE reported that 'effective membership' which they defined as the number of members who attended at least four times a month was 1,491, or 60 per cent of the nominal membership. They also noted that only 1,664 members paid subscriptions.<sup>62</sup> With other voluntary youth organisations both of a civil and uniformed character, local youth organisations were estimated to accommodate some 5,000 young persons, and seventy-seven of these organisations were affiliated to the Federation.<sup>63</sup> This meant that more than half of young people between 14 and 20 years old belonged to some kind of youth organisation, whether municipal or voluntary.

To be a member of the municipal Youth Centres, young persons had to pay an annual fee of either 10s. 6d. for over 16 years old or 5s. 6d. for under 16s. Most other organisations also seemed to ask a small fee, say, one to six pence per week, much cheaper than going to the cinema, in the latter half of the 1940s.<sup>64</sup> Other voluntary youth groups were cheaper still. Coventry Boy Scouts Local Association had 46 units or troops with some 2,000 members.

Each church's youth club could accommodate from some 20 boys and girls to over a hundred. Most organisations held their regular gatherings from one to three times a week, mainly in weekday evenings, more rarely on Saturdays. These gatherings tended to be separated according to gender or age, but mixed evenings at least once a week seemed common and popular.<sup>65</sup>

It is interesting to note that there was a sharp difference of character between municipal youth centres and church clubs or pre-service units. The latter had their own particular activities. Municipal youth centres mainly catered for those who were not attracted by existing youth organisations. The Inspectors of the MoE reported on these clubs as follows:

Membership is large, they cater for young people who have not been interested in joining any other organisation and they are comparatively young associations. Members attend regularly, but generally they have not yet reached that stage when they wish to do something other than ballroom dancing, table-tennis or snooker, in any large numbers. There was not the same feeling of "membership" as in some of the better Voluntary Organisations.<sup>66</sup>

The Inspectors considered this was a problem. But the municipal youth centres certainly provided the most wide-ranging organised activities, from every kind of outdoor sports, indoor games, hobbies, cultural-oriented activities, to discussion groups. The LEA financially supported three youth sports leagues, football, netball and table tennis, and one youth swimming club.<sup>67</sup> It also held a successful youth drama festival annually.

Certainly, much anxiety was expressed about the youth service in Coventry during this period. The inadequacy of premises and equipment, and a lack of leadership were often pointed out. The Government Inspectors looked into 42 local organisations and found that 'the Young Women's Christian Association was the only Club where there was any degree of comfort provided for members'.<sup>68</sup> Concerned voices about the indecent behaviour of young persons were repeatedly publicised in the local newspapers.<sup>69</sup> This was highlighted in 1948, when the Bishop of Coventry contributed lengthy articles over two weeks, sharply criticising the policy and attitude of the local authority towards young people. His immediate concern was that ordinary young persons, who went to the city centre, might become juvenile delinquents, because there was nowhere they might go except to the pub or the cinema.<sup>70</sup> He also criticised the optimism of the LEA that 63 per cent of the Coventry's young people belonged to the some kind of youth organisation. He attacked the management of municipal youth centres. They were too educational and cultural orientated to attract the rougher type of boy. Nor was two full-time youth workers, a man and a woman, enough. Other similar size cities had more.

He made three suggestions about LEA youth service policy. First, he recommended the establishment of a youth cafe where the young could spend their spare time safely. Second, he wanted the appointment of an adequate number of full-time youth supervisors. Third, he suggested a new type of club which could attract the "unclubbable" boy who did not want education but 'fellowship' and a place to consume

his energy.<sup>71</sup> This severe criticism from a member of the local elite upset the LEA and forced it into positive action. The Education Committee had been investigating a youth cafe plan for some time, now it decided to establish one.

It was suggested that a cafe of the right type would go far to meet one of the City's most urgent need. Evidence of such need was forthcoming from practically all the youth organisations in the City, and the many letters which have appeared in the local Press bear witness to the demand from young people who are not attached to any particular youth club or similar organisation ... [for a] cafe being open 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. each evening (including Sundays).<sup>72</sup>

Originally the idea of a municipal youth cafe for the city centre came from the Council of Youth, i.e. young people themselves. Certainly, they could articulate what they wanted and what was realistic. An anonymous 19 years old girl wrote a letter to a local newspaper which stressed the need for a cafe, a games room, lounge and ballroom, and emphasised the distinctive needs of teenagers.

There are many of us courting decent boys, but with no place to meet except the cinema, dance hall, or walking the streets, for often our company is not welcomed at home too regularly.

No one would mind paying a small sum of money, either weekly or yearly, towards costs [of maintaining the youth cafe], and we would work to make it pay its way. One thing I would stress is that there should be no compulsion whatsoever, for we hate to be forced to do things.<sup>73</sup>

The realisation of the project was, however, never easy. Firstly, the Education Committee asked for a grant from the MoE, but this was rejected because in the proposed youth cafe, there was no 'programme of organised cultural training

and recreative activities'.<sup>74</sup> Then, the Committee asked the Finance Committee of the City Council to carry any loss incurred during a three months trial. This was declined for 'it would not be lawful for such loss to be borne by the General Rateable Fund'.<sup>75</sup> Alderman S. Stringer, the Chairman of the Education Committee, discussed the difficulties in 1949.

There has been much discussion during the past year with regard to the establishment of a Youth Cafe, but notwithstanding the almost unanimous wish of both the Education Committee and the Council, nearly insurmountable difficulties in the way it should be financed were encountered. Since it is said that difficulties are only made to be overcome, it may well be that next year will see it launched under another name.<sup>76</sup>

Unfortunately, no further effort was made. It is possible that the LEA used their financial difficulties as an excuse to shelve the problem, for like the central Governments it valued less purely social provision than organised, educational and cultural projects.

There is evidence that criticism of the behaviour of young people in Coventry was exaggerated. When the Church of England Youth Council declared in 1947 that morals among young factory workers in the Midlands were low, leading local figures in youth work denied it.<sup>77</sup> In 1950, the Chief Constable, after a special committee's investigation into the present situation of local juvenile delinquency commissioned by the Home Secretary and the Minister of Education, told a newspaper that delinquency was in reality 'comparatively small'.<sup>78</sup> There had been a substantial growth in membership of youth centres during the 1940s

anyway. A youth centre in Radford claimed to have more than 900 members in 1946.<sup>79</sup> Even a small centre in Wyken with some 150 members, six months after its opening, had a waiting list.<sup>80</sup> In 1950, Coventry had 11 municipal youth centres, and the local Youth Officer could report not only that all areas had been covered, but also that waiting lists were 'still growing'.<sup>81</sup> The LEA hoped that 'a sense of responsibility' or 'social self-control' was being learned by the young.<sup>82</sup>

### Reconstruction and civic entertainments

In that part of the leisure world where there was no commercial vested interests, the local council could make their own, rather slow way. However, municipal reconstruction policy involving the siting of local commercial leisure facilities, such as theatres, cinemas and public houses, was much delayed, even in the severely damaged central area.<sup>83</sup> The Council considered it essential to plan and balance the reconstruction of theatre, concert hall, cinema, public house and other amusement sites.

By August 1943, Coventry had lost 22 on-licences and five off-licenses to air raids,<sup>84</sup> and at the very end of the war, the Council agreed that the city would constitute a Licensing Planning Area under the Licensing Planning Act of 1945.<sup>85</sup> The Chief Constable stated in his first post-war annual report to the Licensed Justices that the small and crowded pubs particularly in the city centre should be replaced by larger ones:

At some of the houses, however, particularly those in central parts of the city, and others at weekends and holiday periods, there was much overcrowding with a lot of noise and jostling. Such conditions cannot be satisfactory or comfortable, either for the licensees or the customers.<sup>86</sup>

The Coventry and District Licensed Victuallers' Association was ready to agree to their modernisation policy of the Chief Constable for 'fewer and better houses'. Brewers in general seem to have wanted to establish modern large pubs and to transfer the licences of small ones to them.

However, the re-allocation of public houses in the city centre was not easy. During the public enquiry into the Coventry Redevelopment Plan in 1946, representatives of the various brewers who owned pubs in the area raised objections against any plan which would undermine their present profitable position.<sup>87</sup> Even by 1948, there was no agreement between the City Council and the licensees as to the central provision. The local authority proposed that the new shopping precinct should have no licensed premises, and that the total number of those in the centre should be reduced from a pre-war 98 to 55.<sup>88</sup> As to the provision of premises in the suburbs, the City Council suggested that every community with 10,000 residents should have four 'intimate' pubs and one licensed hotel. The licensees, on the other hand, proposed six licensed pubs plus one large one.

Apart from the fact that there were various different interests vested in each case, there were considerable difficulties in securing building materials and labour. Even after the City Council eventually permitted 73 central licensed premises with much wider floor space in total than



that pre-war<sup>89</sup>, negotiations between it and the Brewers' Association did not make much progress.<sup>90</sup> There was another tension between the drink traders and the local authority. The brewers and licensees not only tried to make their public houses much more attractive in their layout and decoration, but also attempted to widen their fields of service. The Birmingham Brewers' Association and others who ran pubs in Coventry applied to the local food committee for catering licences but were refused. Thus, it was natural that they persistently objected to any municipal attempt to have drink licences in the local authority's Civic Restaurants.<sup>91</sup> In its Development Plan of 1952, the City Council persistently adhered to the idea of a planned and balanced allocation of licensed premises,<sup>92</sup> but the brewers' interest was by no means negligible.

The owners of theatres and cinemas also objected to compulsorily land requisition and site transfer without substantial compensation, arguing that it would destroy their present businesses and invalidate their massive capital investments in the past.<sup>93</sup> Like the brewers, however, they were ready to extend and modernise their seating capacities and facilities. The Associated British Cinema Ltd., which owned the 1,500 seat Empire Theatre wanted to erect a much bigger modern cinema in the central area.<sup>94</sup> Odeon Theatres Ltd., which owned four cinemas in Coventry, also applied to build a modern cinema in the central area, where the City Council felt it would be necessary to build two more cinemas.<sup>95</sup> The Rex Cinema,

which had been one of three main cinemas in the city centre before being destroyed by enemy action, also wanted to rebuild 'a super cinema of similar class and style... with amenities connected therewith by way of Restaurant, Car Park, etc.' in the central area.<sup>96</sup> The Hippodrome, the only theatre in Coventry with 2,200 seats, submitted its new plan for an additional theatre in Coventry as early as April 1946.<sup>97</sup> During wartime, the Hippodrome became associated with other major theatre interests both in the metropolis and the provinces, and succeeded in introducing various live performances of a type much wider than it had had been able to offer before.<sup>98</sup> The old Hippodrome had competed with the Opera House before the war in attracting local theatre goers and won, and now, the former would like to consolidate and extend its position. The Hippodrome did not mind any project of a non-commercial kind such as a civic theatre and repertory company. However, it stated that its proposal was 'dependent on the Corporation undertaking that for an agreed period no other theatre', which might undermine their business, should be allowed to start in Coventry.<sup>99</sup> Orr Enterprises Ltd., one of the biggest local entertainment entrepreneurs, proposed another plan for a massive entertainment centre in the central area. It might have included a repertory theatre and cinema with 1,530 seats, a dance hall with a 2,000 capacity, a newsreel theatre to seat 600, a billiard hall with 24 tables, and snack bars for 800.<sup>100</sup> Nothing came of it.

The City Council rejected the above plan, and was determined to provide the most suitable cultural and

entertainment facilities in the city from its ideal planning point of view. From May 1949, the Town Clerk started to ask every relevant person and organisation, from commercial interests to the Arts Council, local amateur drama association and founder of pre-war Coventry Repertory Company, if they had any suggestions about long term entertainment policy in the central area. The Council was interested not only in restoring the pre-war standard of places of entertainment in the city centre, but also with 'the establishment of places of entertainment in sufficient number and variety to meet the probable needs of the City's population in the future'.<sup>101</sup>

In replying, the local Amateur Drama Association reported that their 'dream' was to have a small theatre with some 500 seats,<sup>102</sup> and theatre and cinema entrepreneurs submitted their own schemes for re-building, modernisation and extension, as we have seen.<sup>103</sup> The Arts Council, strangely enough, simply asked for immediate financial support for its Midland Theatre Company.<sup>104</sup> However, one year after the initial enquiry, the Town Clerk wrote to a commercial entrepreneur that the Corporation had had to postpone a conference with various interested persons because of the general delay of city redevelopment.<sup>105</sup> In a context of national economic crisis in the second half of 1940s, delay in reconstruction was not uncommon. In Coventry, the ultimate priority was given to housing, then reconstruction of the central area, but within that area, shopping sites had first priority, and the re-allocation of

places of entertainment was the last thing to be considered.<sup>106</sup>

There was another unwelcome blow which discouraged municipal intervention in the commercial leisure world. In 1947, the City Council proposed a new Coventry Corporation Bill, which included a clause, Clause 56, that made it possible for the Corporation to provide 'entertainment facilities to "concert halls, entertainment rooms, reading-rooms, pavilions, conservatories, lecture rooms, conference halls, winter gardens and bandstands"'. The clause would also enable the Corporation to 'erect and acquire buildings for these purposes'. Furthermore, Clause 57 was to allow the Corporation to provide 'concerts, displays, exhibitions, dances and other entertainments (including cinematograph entertainments, stage plays and variety entertainments...), lectures, conferences and other meetings', in any place in the locality.<sup>107</sup>

There was a positive side to all this. Two examples, drama and music will illustrate. The local amateur dramatics movement bloomed during the war.<sup>108</sup> The Technical College Theatre became the site for performances by amateur dramatic societies and high brow touring companies allocated by the Council for Encouragement of Music and Arts. The local authority was quite keen to sponsor the amateur dramatic movement. From 1944, it organised its own Civic Drama Festival. Backing up this non-commercial theatre, the Drama Director of the newly established Arts Council told the Coventry Playgoers' Circle<sup>109</sup> that a new residential repertory company of the Council would be accommodated at

the Technical College, and this was created in March 1946 as the Midland Repertory Theatre.<sup>110</sup> Immediately after the war, therefore, two kinds of demand about theatre provision were repeatedly made. One was for the construction of a straight drama theatre,<sup>111</sup> and the other was for the revival of Coventry Repertory Company or the creation of a new municipal theatre company.<sup>112</sup> The hopes and problems about local musical movement and facilities followed a similar pattern. During the initial stage of the war, amateur musical activities declined because of the call up of their young members.<sup>113</sup> However, in its later stages, several first class orchestral concerts and fine popular classical music concerts played by military bands in the open-air were allocated to Coventry under the auspices of ENSA.<sup>114</sup> After the war, amateur music interests in the locality revived quickly.<sup>115</sup> The ENSA Industrial Music Club in Coventry, constituted mainly by factory workers, and with some 300 members, carried on its tasks after being transferred to the Arts Council including lectures of an educational character.<sup>116</sup> Against this high tide of musical activity, it was pointed out that there was a lack of a 'well-equipped' concert hall and of 'adequate accommodation' for open air concerts in the War Memorial Park.<sup>117</sup>

Thus, there were grounds for the two municipal entertainments clauses in the Corporation Bill. However Clause 56 was regarded as an extravagance by the president of the Coventry Chamber of Commerce.<sup>118</sup> Though Clause 57 allowed the local authority to show educational films

only,<sup>119</sup> the Coventry branch of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association strongly objected to it.

**Table 5:2 The polling results of municipal trades Bill.<sup>120</sup>**

clause	for	against
Provision of District Heating	26,934	12,555
Establishment of Smokeless Zone	27,990	11,302
Concert Halls, etc. (Clause 56)	27,015	12,485
Municipal Washing Delivery	21,593	16,930
Entertainments Provision (Clause 57)	15,168	23,571
Wireless Distribution	12,690	25,887
Civic Hotels	14,168	24,661
Municipal Taxi Service	13,922	24,878

These clauses were subject to a type of local referendum though only 23 per cent of the public voted.<sup>121</sup> Most local people did not show any interest in this municipal project. Secondly, as Table 5:2 shows, local opinion accepted the role of local government as provider of buildings and equipment for entertainment, but rejected its role as direct provider of entertainment. The local authority's disappointment was great enough. It criticised people's general indifference in its public information leaflet: 'Citizenship entails responsibility, and though it may be said that Coventry's 23 per cent poll compares favourably with our neighbour, Birmingham's 7 per cent, this does not excuse the others for their indolence'.<sup>122</sup>

## 2. Commercial Provision

During the immediate post-war period, all pre-war commercial entertainments seem to have revived in popularity quickly. However, apart from the very slow progress of pub

reconstruction, during the 1940s, there were no drastic changes in the provision of commercial entertainments in Coventry. Although there was a minor increase in the total number of registered cinemas and theatres, only one theatre and 18 cinemas with a 21,690 seating capacity had adequate facilities.<sup>123</sup> In the late forties, there were 243 on-licensed premises, while the number of registered off-licensed premises was on the increase from 112 in 1946 to 128 in 1951.<sup>124</sup> As to commercial dance halls, there was no change in their numbers.<sup>125</sup> The greyhound racing stadium remained the only one in Coventry, and although the annual totalisator turnover reached its peak in 1946, it then began falling remarkably.<sup>126</sup> The local speedway team retained a sizable number of supporters during the period. In 1948, it could attract 18,000 spectators,<sup>127</sup> and in 1949 its supporters club had 6,000 members.<sup>128</sup> There was interesting evidence suggesting a strong presence of young women among speedway spectators.<sup>129</sup> But another spectator sport, professional football, followed a similar line to that of greyhound racing. In the immediate post-war 'booming years',<sup>130</sup> Coventry City Football Club recorded its highest gates, an average 26,683 per match in season 1950-51. However, by season 1951-52 it was relegated to the Third Division and the gate continued to fall, as Table J in the Appendix shows.

In 1949, Mr. Harold Hunt of the Gaumont Cinema, which had the biggest seating capacity in the city, stated that attendances 'reached their peak in 1945 and were now slightly fewer, but they were still above those of 1939'.<sup>131</sup>

Although the general manager of the Orr Circuit, owner of two local cinemas, the Opera House and the Alexandra, said their attendance had increased 25 per cent since 1939, two other representatives of the Empire and Scala agreed that the increases during the 1940s was only in proportion to the increase in the population.<sup>132</sup> A local newspaper calculated that some 290,000 cinema tickets were sold every week in Coventry during 1949.<sup>133</sup> It meant that every person in Coventry went to a cinema more than once a week. Certainly, cinema-going was one of most popular leisure activities in the locality, particularly among women. A sociological survey carried out in the late forties found that nearly half of the women on Braydon Road in a prefabricated suburban neighbourhood unit, where no cinema existed, yet went to the cinema at least once a week.<sup>134</sup> Cinema was an occasion for active neighbouring among the women on the estate, but not among the men. The men visited the cinema less often, and when they did they accompanied their wives or just dropped at a cinema on the way home from work. However, cinema exhibitors were not particularly happy. Among other things, the Government's heavy entertainments duty on films was a headache to cinema managers.<sup>135</sup> The observation that cinema going was not a family activity was confirmed by another local survey on the different areas where local cinemas existed.<sup>136</sup> Although there was no breakdown according to gender or age, it was found that more than two-thirds of the sample used a cinema, and that among cinema goers no less than 45 per cent frequented a cinema more than once a week.<sup>137</sup> Another interesting finding of



the survey was that more than a half of the cinema goers used local cinemas only. The more regular their cinema going habits, the less loyal they were to local cinemas.<sup>138</sup>

It was claimed in 1946 that every year 'nearly three-quarters of a million people' visited the Hippodrome.<sup>139</sup> The Hippodrome probably suffered less from the general environment of austerity than other entertainment businesses, even though it was said that the times did not favour the theatrical business.<sup>140</sup> The Hippodrome was the only professional theatre in Coventry, and it could meet customers' different tastes by associating with other commercial theatres and circuits, particularly with those in London. The residents at the Braydon Road neighbourhood unit could not be described as theatre goers, but went to revues or pantomimes. Theatre going was family occasion for them, unlike cinema going.<sup>141</sup>

From the summer of 1946, beer rationing started. What had been bad in wartime was even worse in the peace.<sup>142</sup> The overcrowding and some kind of discrimination between customers were inevitable.<sup>143</sup> The situation in which the brewers and cinema owners were placed in the early 1950s was serious enough, especially for the former. Although the Chief Constable reported in 1949 that licensed houses could open their premises for the full permitted hours because of adequate supplies of alcohol,<sup>144</sup> it was reported in March 1950 that brewers in the Midlands area were losing half a million pounds a year.<sup>145</sup> In that report, Mr. S. Hull,

secretary of Coventry and District Licensed Victuallers' Association listed four damaging reasons for the decline: a drop in spending power by increasing income tax; unfavourable re-assessment of rates on licensed premises; increasing overhead charges; and increasing taxation on alcoholic drinks. A local cinema manager was also worried about the effect of lack of cash among local people. He told a newspaper that people were 'prepared to wait for as long as two hours for a 1s. 9d. seat rather than pay 3s. 6d. for immediate admittance'.<sup>146</sup>

Almost a year later, in February 1951, the president of the Coventry and District Licensed Victuallers' Association told a local newspaper that publicans were going bankrupt: 'Coventry businessmen no longer meet for a mid-day drink, the man-in-the-street has cut out his nightly visit to the "local", and the only time Coventry public-houses really get busy is at week-ends'.<sup>147</sup> One local pub manager agreed that drinking at the local had 'dropped steadily since the war, as money "got tighter"', yet others felt the situation not as bleak because of high-wages and lack of alternatives: 'Coventry publicans are still holding their own, because a large floating population with higher-than-average wages and few alternative entertainments has remained faithful to the "pub"'.<sup>148</sup> The sociological survey on Braydon Road also found that pub-going was a popular leisure activity among the male residents. However, as the only local pub was like 'an army canteen' as one resident claimed, the pub going tended to spread outside the immediate locality, and the pub hardly became a focal point in their neighbourhood unit.<sup>149</sup>

Furthermore, there appeared a formidable rival to public house. The social club in the area, which was established by the residents themselves in 1950, played a much more important role than the public house:

Members of the Social Club whom we interviewed at Braydon Road carefully differentiated public-house and social clubs. The main factors in their preferences for the club are the emphasis on sociability rather than drink, the more selective and companionable atmosphere, and participation in management.<sup>150</sup>

However, in an area where a good and well established public house existed, pub-going tended to be a local habit, and the majority of the pub-going male public in the area frequented the pub at least once a week.<sup>151</sup>

## Notes to Chapter 5

- 1 PRO, LAB 26/81. Lynette Griffith Jones, Welfare Officer for Coventry, 'Report of Coventry, September 1940'. She further noted that the Town Clerk's Department and the LEA resented 'the idea of Welfare Department', listing only three helpful and progressive men; Mr. Gibson, the City Architect, Mr. Hilton, the City Librarian and Captain Hector, the Chief Constable.
- 2 See, Anon., 'Factory City Thinks Again: A Study of the Coventry Plan', in *Future Books*, vol. 3 (1946), pp. 14-22.
- 3 CS, 13 April 1946; Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), pp. 94-96.
- 4 CS, 13 April 1946.
- 5 CS, 18 May 1946. It reported that 'there were eight Rugby football pitches, six hockey pitches and 16 Association football pitches. At the present only three "Soccer" pitches' existed, but roads 'were made over the area, trenches were dug and defence works were established'.
- 6 CS, 18 May 1946.
- 7 CS, 28 August 1948.
- 8 See, CS, 6 May 1944 and 4 November 1944.
- 9 CS, 1 June 1946.
- 10 CS, 15 January 1949. It highlighted the situation of local junior football teams reporting that 'in one instance a venue was changed on five occasions within 72 hours preceding the match'.
- 11 CRO, CP, 'Parks Superintendent's Monthly Report', 5 July 1948. The names of eight leagues are as follows: Boys' Brigade, Coventry Amateur Combination, Coventry and District League, Coventry and District Bible Class, Coventry Minor League, Coventry Works League, Coventry and North Warwickshire League, and Youth League.
- 12 See, CS, 13 April 1946 and 28 August 1948. The site with 187 acres was planned to include '26 playing fields for football and hockey, a county cricket ground, three bowling greens, three netball pitches, a miniature golf course, 24 tennis courts and a children's playground' and a sports stadium with capacity of 50,000 spectators. See also, Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), p. 94.
- 13 See, Table E in the Appendix.
- 14 *Civic Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 8 (August, 1948), p. 3.
- 15 Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), p. 104. There was one other bath at the Bridge Hotel on the London Road, but it did not serve the general public. See, CS, 13 July 1946.
- 16 CS, 22 May 1953.
- 17 Between January and October 1948, the total number of the male users were 40,483, while only 16,022 women made use of the swimming bath: CRO, CP, various monthly reports of the Baths Superintendent in 1948.
- 18 CS, 13 August 1949.
- 19 Coventry City Libraries, *Statistics for the Year 1938-1939*.

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- 20 For example, in the year 1934-35, various cultural, educational and hobby clubs held a total of 220 meetings. Among them, the Workers Educational Association was the most frequent user. See, *Coventry Public libraries' Annual Reports and Annual Statistics* in 1930s.
- 21 See, Table F in the Appendix. See also, *CET*, 6 November 1944.
- 22 *Coventry City Libraries, Report for the Two Years ended 31st March 1944*, p. 2.
- 23 *Coventry City Libraries, Report for the Year 1945-46*, p. 1.
- 24 *City of Coventry, Libraries and Museum Committee, Report for the Period 1st April 1946 - 31st March 1949*, p. 2.
- 25 *Libraries and Museum Committee, Annual Report 1949-50*, p. 9.
- 26 *City of Coventry, Libraries and Museum Committee, Annual Report 1952-53*, p. 1.
- 27 *City of Coventry, Libraries and Museum Committee, Report for the Period 1st April 1946 - 31st March 1949*.
- 28 *City of Coventry Libraries, Annual Reports* (various years).
- 29 *City of Coventry, Libraries and Museum Committee, Annual Report 1949-50*, p. 2.
- 30 *Coventry City Council, The Development Plan* (1952).
- 31 J. F. Hayes, 'Convenience and Selectivity, and the Planning of Neighbourhood Units', in 'Coventry Sociological Survey' (unpublished report, 1953), p. 57.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *City of Coventry, Libraries and Museum Committee, Annual Report 1949-50*, p. 2. In the report, it was noted that for 'nearly 3 months the number of recordings was quite inadequate and the Committee suffered the embarrassment of being unable to supply more, since neither they nor the finance Committee could provide the additional money required'.
- 34 *CS*, 11 March 1960.
- 35 *CRO, CP*, a memo submitted to the Libraries, Art Gallery and Museums Committee, 'Museum Policy', 11 December 1957.
- 36 *City of Coventry, Libraries and Museum Committee, Annual Report 1949-50*, p. 7.
- 37 *CRO, Acc 240/1/15 'A War Time Social Survey on the Need for Provision of Additional Cultural and Recreational Facilities in the City of Coventry, undertaken by the Coventry sports and social Association at the Request of the Ministry of Labour and National Service' (September, 1943). This survey was done by the secretary of the Coventry Sports and Social Association, which had been established with the support of the Ministry of Labour and whose primary purpose was to take care of transferred war workers' spare time in the community.*
- 38 *Minutes of the Community Centres Committee*, 11 July 1944.

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- 39 Ibid. First three centres were allocated in Holbrooks, Pinley and Bell Green.
- 40 CS, 28 July 1945.
- 41 CRO, Sec/MB/93/1, Minutes of the Community Centres Sectional Committee, 19 September 1945.
- 42 Ibid., 20 February 1945.
- 43 Ibid., 8 May 1946.
- 44 CRO, Sec/CF/1/9371, Holbrook Community Association, 5th Annual Report, 1949-50. For example, in Holbrook Community Centre, only the following were constituent members: Amalgamated Engineering Union Holbrooks Branch; Exhall (West) Labour Party; St. John's Ambulance Brigade, Holbrooks Division; Holbrooks and District Young Conservatives; Holbrooks and District Welfare Association; Holbrooks Labour Party (Women's Section); Lockhurst Lane Co-operative Society (Education Section); St. Elizabeth's Catholic Young Men's Society; and Wheelwright Lane Women's Guild.
- 45 See, various annual reports in CRO, Sec/CF/1/9371. On women's activities at Pinley, see, CS, 27 August 1949.
- 46 CRO, Sec/CF/1/9371, Bell Green Community Association, Fourth Annual Report 1949-50.
- 47 CS, 9 November 1946.
- 48 CRO, Sec/CF/1/9371, Cheylesmore Community Association, First Annual Report 1948-49. It was reported that before the opening of the centre, more than 300 people applied for membership by post. See, CS, 8 May 1948.
- 49 CRO, Sec/CF/1/9371, letter, the Town Clerk to the Secretary of the MoE, 13 December 1947; letter, Mrs. C. H. B. Gillespie, MoE, to the Town Clerk, 15 January 1948.
- 50 Coventry City Council, *Municipal Handbook 1950-1951*, p. 101.
- 51 Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), pp. 111-12. The Cheylesmore Centre, which had the largest membership of 1,200 in 1948, was also reported to lack support. See, CS, 15 October 1949.
- 52 CS, 26 November 1949.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), p. 112.
- 55 G. Tremlett, *Clubmen. The History of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union* (1987), p. 207.
- 56 L. Kuper, 'Blue Print Living for Together', in L. Kuper (ed.), *Living in Towns* (1953), p. 126.
- 57 See, City of Coventry, *Service of Youth Handbook* (various editions). The Youth Committee in Coventry originated in 1920 when its name was the Youth Juvenile Committee. This post-war re-organisation was planned in 1944. See, CS, 18 March 1944.
- 58 City of Coventry, *Service of Youth Handbook*, 1946.
- 59 CRO, CP, MoE, 'General Area Survey of Youth Service in the County Borough of Coventry held in November 1946', p. 5. This report was confidential at the time. It was reported that the total membership of municipal youth centres was 3,400 in CS, 14th September 1946.

- 60 On details of the war-time youth service in Coventry, see my thesis.
- 61 Mr. Edward Bell, the Youth Organiser of Coventry Education Authority, stated repeatedly that 63 per cent of local young people belonged to some kind of youth organisations, throughout 1945 to 1948. However, it was not clear how he calculated the figure. See, CS, 15 September 1945 and 14 September 1946; CET, 16 January 1948. In 1950, although the total number of the Centres increased to eleven, Mr. E. Hagard, Coventry Youth Officer toned down the estimate of members to 3,000, with an additional 3,000 members in other local youth organisations. See, CS, 6 April 1950.
- 62 CRO, CP, MoE, 'General Area Survey' (1946), p. 8.
- 63 CS, 14 September 1946. However, according to the MoE's survey, it was reported that membership of municipal youth centres was 2,500 and that of other voluntary organisations was 3,000. See, CRO, CP, MoE, 'General Area Survey' (1946), p. 5. Various voluntary youth organisations operated in Coventry, see City of Coventry, *Service of Youth Handbook* (various editions).
- 64 City of Coventry, *Service of Youth Handbook* (various editions).
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 CRO, CP, MoE, 'General Area Survey' (1946), p. 7.
- 67 City of Coventry, *Service of Youth Handbook 1947/48*. In 1951 season, the football league had 23 teams in its sections. See, CS, 31 August 1951.
- 68 CRO, CP, MoE, 'General Area Survey' (1946), p. 7.
- 69 In September 1945, a conference on juvenile delinquency was held in Coventry, organised by various local groups. Speakers at the conference urged that a new leadership in youth organisation be created; argued for sympathy for children, not punishment; and suggested the removal of 'doddering old magistrates. They also wanted 'low-down commercial dance halls' and 'sloppy' modern films replaced by 'Victorian family life, with its self-created amusement' (CS, 29 September 1945). In 1947, a Justice of the Peace warned Coventry Women Conservatives about local parents' neglect of children, observing that it was 'no unusual thing to find 11 and 12-year-old children getting 10s. a week to spend on ice-creams and cinemas' (CS, 5 April 1947). Owners of buildings in Cheylesmore wrote that the young persons of the day seemed 'to have little else to do than to commit wanton damage' (CS, 15 March 1947).
- 70 CET, 9 January 1948.
- 71 CET, 16 January 1948. It was shown that these suggestions were largely drawn from successful youth work in Hull, which was similarly damaged by bombs. In a letter to the editors on the same newspaper of the same date, Hull's experience was referred to in the following way: 'similar delinquency and moral aberration has been countered with excellent police boys' clubs, a youth cafe and numerous youth clubs with very large memberships'.

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- 72 Minutes of the Education Committee, 11 February 1948. The Committee's resolution on the day was as follows: 'Resolved that, subject to concurrence by the Civic Restaurant Committee, approval be given to the establishment of a Youth Cafe at the Corporation Street Civic Restaurant on trial for 3 months, and that a joint Committee representative of the Civic Restaurant Committee and Youth Committee be appointed to determine the policy and administration of the proposed cafe.'
- 73 *CET*, 16 January 1948.
- 74 Minutes of the Education Committee, 8 September 1948.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 14 September 1948.
- 76 City of Coventry, *Service of Youth Handbook* 1949.
- 77 *CS*, 14 June 1947. Among them, were included the Labour Officer at the Humber Company Ltd. and General Electric Company's Women Welfare Worker. The title of the report was *Church and Youth*.
- 78 *CS*, 18 March 1950.
- 79 *CS*, 5 October 1946. This Youth Centre was accommodated in Hill Farm Junior Elementary School and its members were said to be drawn from all over the city.
- 80 *CS*, 14 May 1949. Although nominal membership was claimed to be 75 and 70 for boys and girls respectively, the newspaper reported 'a much larger percentage of boys than girls'.
- 81 *CS*, 6 April 1950.
- 82 *CS*, 30 April 1949.
- 83 For a detailed account of the difficulties of central area reconstruction, facing Coventry Corporation in the period, see N. Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics. Coventry 1945-60* (1990), Chapter 3, 'City Reconstruction: building a new Coventry, 1945-51'.
- 84 Cmd. 6504, *Report of the Committee on War Damaged Licensed Premises and Reconstruction* (1944).
- 85 *CS*, 7 July 1945.
- 86 *CS*, 9 February 1946.
- 87 *CS*, 29 June 1946.
- 88 *CS*, 3 July 1948 and 14 April 1949.
- 89 *CS*, 3 July 1948. Interestingly, the new Chief Constable, Mr. E. W. C. Pendleton, warned that 55 premises in the centre would not be sufficient, and it would lead to the situation where private clubs would spring up.
- 90 *CS*, 24 December 1948 and 14 April 1949.
- 91 See, *CS*, 24 May 1947, *CET*, 6 January 1948 and again *CS*, 4 June 1949.
- 92 Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), pp. 107-08. The Council suggested that 'a good many public houses are small, and are badly designed and laid out' for the central area, and that an ideal neighbourhood unit would have 'one large public house at the neighbourhood centre, one medium road house and five smaller "locals"'.
- 93 *CS*, 29 June 1946. The owners of the Hippodrome and the Rex Cinema raised objections against the Corporations' Development Plan of 1946.



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- 94 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter, W. R. Glen to C. Barratt, 21 March 1947.
  - 95 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter Goddard and Smith to the Town Clerk, Coventry, 19 January 1948.
  - 96 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter B. Hatton & Co. to C. Barratt, 31 May 1949.
  - 97 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter A. Newsome & Co. to the Town Clerk, 15 December 1947.
  - 98 For a brief historical account of the Hippodrome, see, CS, 12 October 1946. Mr. S. H. Newsome was a director of the Stoll Corporation which controlled 12 theatres in London and 11 in the provinces.
  - 99 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, The Coventry Hippodrome Co. Ltd., 'Memorandum relative to the provision of live theatre in Coventry', n.d.
  - 100 CS, 3 December 1954.
  - 101 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter, Town Clerk to the Secretary of the Arts Council, 4 May 1949.
  - 102 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter, Sam Bate, the Secretary of the Coventry Amateur Drama Association to the Town Clerk, 29 May 1949.
  - 103 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, a memorandum, 'Places of Entertainment', submitted to the Sites Allocation Sub-Committee, 23 November 1949.
  - 104 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter, C. Landstone, Associate Drama Director, the Arts Council of Great Britain, to the Town Clerk, 26 August 1949.
  - 105 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter, Town Clerk to Messrs. Goddard & Smith, 23 May 1950.
  - 106 This situation had not changed since 1948. The Town Clerk had already explained the difficult situation which the Sites (Allocation) Sub-Committee was facing in 1948: 'In view of their heavy commitments in connection with immediate proposals for the reconstruction of the City Centre, and the attendant pressure of work on the staff available, the Committee have decided that they must defer for the time being the undertaking of discussions upon problems which, though important, are not of such urgency as the reconstruction programme upon which the Council have embarked in the vicinity of Broadgate'. See, CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter Town Clerk to H. C. Orr, 18th October 1948.
  - 107 Special Supplement to *Civic Affairs*, 'Coventry Corporation Bill' (January 1948). See also, *CET*, 14 November 1947.
  - 108 Immediately after the war, amateur groups, which had been organised and financially supported by the Coventry Sports and Social Association, became self-supporting constituents. See, CS, 1 September 1945.
  - 109 Coventry Playgoers' Circle was formed in 1944, and it was claimed that within a few days of its formation notice, 631 members had become enroled. CS, 4 May 1944.
  - 110 CS, 15 December 1945 and 23 March. 1946. The latter reported the historical relationship between the Arts Council (formerly the Council for the Encouragement of Music and Arts): 'The Fostering of stage plays was

- undertaken in 1942 by the Council for the Encouragement of Music and Arts, which sponsored touring companies chiefly for industrial hostels. But it was felt that a circle of theatre goers far wider than merely industrial workers would be delighted to see such productions. Consequently the Principal of the Technical College, Mr. J. Willson, approached CEMA and inquired if it would not be possible for the Technical College Theatre at Coventry to be included in the touring programme. ... Since then, there had been 32 different productions...'
- 111 The Hippodrome wanted to have another theatre which would specialise in performance of straight plays. On the other hand, Mr. J. Wilson, Principal of the Technical College was most enthusiastic about the idea of building a new municipal theatre, which could accommodate and cater for the amateur dramatic movement, partly because he was very anxious about unpopularity of the inadequate theatrical facilities and atmosphere of the College Theatre. The Midland Theatre Company, which had been unsatisfactorily stationed at the College Theatre, moved its headquarters, though temporarily, to the newly-opened theatre at Kidderminster within a year. This venture was found unsuccessful, prompting a return to the College Theatre in Coventry. See, CS, 29 November 1947.
- 112 CS, 1 December 1945. The demand for civic theatre seemed high not in Coventry but nationally after the war. At its first post-war conference, the Association of Municipal Corporations called for 'the introduction of legislation to enable local authorities to provide and manage municipal theatres'. See, CS, 1 June 1946.
- 113 CS, 9 February 1946.
- 114 The London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Halle Orchestra and the City of Birmingham Orchestra visited Coventry, and played in the Hippodrome and in the Methodist Central Hall. See, for example, CS, 17 March, 26 May and 9 June, 1945. Military bands such as Plymouth Royal Marines played, too. See, CS, 9 February 1946.
- 115 Coventry Amateur Operatic Society, All Souls' Junior Society, St. Mary's Guildhall, Coventry Philharmonic Society, the Armstrong-Siddeley Male Voice Choir, all revived within twelve months after the war. The City of Coventry Band, which was the brass section of the City of Coventry Orchestra, became famous nationally during the war, and various pre-service military bands consolidated their position. The Coventry Co-operative Orchestra, the Civil Defence Orchestra and the Coventry Light Orchestra were newly formed. Dance bands such as Coventry Rhythm Club were also busy. On the local music scene in the 1940s, see an article 'Is Coventry Musical?', CS, 9 February 1946. On the activities of the City of Coventry Band, see CS, 23 June 1945 and 21 September 1946.
- 116 See documents in CRO, Acc 1096, Coventry Industrial Music Club, files, 1946-49. Apart from Coventry, some

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- 20 similar clubs were organised in other industrial towns.
- 117 See, CS, 9 February and 21 September 1946.
- 118 CS, 5 January 1948.
- 119 CS, 21 January 1948. This municipal concern with educational film shows could be observed first in October 1946. The Local Education Committee supported the initiative of the local branch of NALGO in showing educational films for school children in their staff canteen. See, Education Committee minutes, 9 October 1946 and 14 May 1947; CS, 17 May 1947. Then, the Committee sponsored the newly established local Junior Film Group with 700 members, in order to provide 'some guidance against the habit of indiscriminate cinema-going'. See, CS, 11 October 1947. The Education Committee was certainly dissatisfied with the children's Saturday cinema clubs run by the commercial exhibitors. See, Education Committee minutes, 18 July 1951.
- 120 CS, 31 January 1948.
- 121 CET, 29 January 1948.
- 122 *Civic Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 2 (February 1948).
- 123 Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), p. 109.
- 124 See, Table H in the Appendix. The Total number of Coventry pubs had been declining in the inter-war years. The steady growth of licensed clubs in the suburban areas was also an inter-war phenomenon. See, J. Crump, 'Recreation in Coventry between the Wars', in B. Lancaster and T. Mason (ed.), *Life and Labour in a 20th Century City* (1986).
- 125 In *What's on in Coventry, 1947-49*, only two commercial dance halls were advertised, the Rialto Casino and the Drill Hall.
- 126 See, Table L in the Appendix.
- 127 Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction* (1990), p. 150, n35.
- 128 CS, 15 January 1949.
- 129 Various issues of *The Loudspeaker*, the GEC works magazine, featured women workers whose hobby was watching speedway racing.
- 130 D. Henderson, *The Sky Blue. The Story of Coventry F. C.* (1968), pp. 30-34. Henderson noted that, in the immediate post-war years, when the Club was thought 'a tough' proposition in the Second Division, 'anyone coming away from Highfield Road with a point could be said to have achieved a solid afternoon's work'.
- 131 CS, 14 May 1949.
- 132 Ibid.
- 133 Ibid. This fact has already been referred to in Tiratsoo's study, *Reconstruction* (1990), p. 150, n35.
- 134 Kuper, 'Blue Print' in Kuper, *Living in Towns* (1953), p. 120.
- 135 CS, 18 May 1951.
- 136 Hayes, 'Convenience and Selectivity', p. 26.
- 137 Ibid., Table 12.
- 138 Ibid., pp. 25-30 and 54-56.

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- 139 Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction* (1990), p. 150, n35; CS, 12 October 1946.
- 140 CS reported on 8 January 1949 that: 'the theatre has been passing through difficult days and some of the old glamour has been dimmed. One of the main reason is that the high cost of production and maintenance has put a limit on adventure, as the capacity of theatre makes the struggle between profit and loss a hazardous affair.'
- 141 Kuper, 'Blue Print' in Kuper, *Living in Towns* (1953), p. 120.
- 142 CS, 15 June 1946.
- 143 CS, 14 February 1948.
- 144 CS, 12 February 1949.
- 145 CS, 18 March 1950.
- 146 CS, 18 March 1950.
- 147 CS, 16 February 1951.
- 148 Ibid.
- 149 Kuper, 'Blue Print' in Kuper, *Living in Towns* (1953), p. 122.
- 150 Ibid.
- 151 Hayes, 'Convenience and Selectivity', pp. 30-32 and 55-56.

## Chapter 6: Municipal and Commercial Provision in Leisure, Bolton, 1945-51

This chapter deals with the municipal and commercial aspects of leisure in the Bolton of the post-war 1940s. There were many differences in the aim and roles of the Bolton and Coventry Councils when it comes to leisure. The political complexion, the different degree of war damage, and the different cultural tradition, all contributed in shaping the distinctive content of municipal leisure provision and services. Firstly, the major recreational facilities provided by local governments in Bolton in the forties, and the roles of local government in this area will be explored. Then, the commercial provision of leisure is to be examined. The people's reception of these facilities and services will be described in each case.

### 1. Municipal Provision

Before the local elections of 1946, the Conservatives announced that they would like to see the establishment of a new concert hall and a new central swimming pool, although they themselves recognised that this was a dream.<sup>1</sup> Labour's election agenda included no such large scale project but a more realistic expansion of youth and library services. There were no grand or sophisticated plans for leisure, as was attempted by Labour Coventry. Yet, there was some effort at modernisation, in order to make existing municipal recreational facilities more attractive and more in line with the tastes of the younger generation. And most

significantly, compared to the failure in Coventry, the official Entertainments Committee gradually established itself and some new municipal entertainments services.

### Open spaces and recreational facilities

There was a wide range of municipal sports facilities in post-war Bolton. In 1948, Bolton Corporation had a total of 30 parks, open spaces, golf courses, gardens and recreational grounds, totalling 495 acres.<sup>2</sup> The Table D in the Appendix shows the number and range of facilities the Corporation had at the time. The Corporation recognised that the main local demand was for playing fields, whose numbers had hardly grown since 1939. Some 60 local football teams, as well as many local schools, were using 31 pitches to their full capacity.<sup>3</sup>

One of the earliest steps to catch up with this increasing demand involved extending the opening hours of municipal sports facilities. A year after the war, Bolton Town Council, which had no overall majority,<sup>4</sup> decided to open its golf course, bowling greens and tennis courts on Sundays. Supporters of Sunday games criticised their opponents' attitude as out of date. Alderman Lowe, Labour member, attacked them by asking 'whether the Council with an average age of 55 to 60 was competent to feel and respect the desires of modern youth'.<sup>5</sup> Another Council member claimed that young ex-service men could not understand 'the old fashioned idea' which kept sports facilities closed on Sundays. The proposal was supported by 42 votes, while there were still 33 Councillors who voted against it.<sup>6</sup> On the

opening day of Sunday games, 1,185 bowlers, 319 putting green players, 127 golfers and 102 tennis players turned up.<sup>7</sup> The next week, the total number of users exceeded 2,000, and Sunday provision sustained its popularity throughout the summer.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in 1948, Bolton Council approved a recommendation of the Parks Committee that, on Sundays, indoor games should also be allowed in the parks for 12 months as an experiment. This recommendation was passed by 45 votes to 22.<sup>9</sup>

High demands for local sports facilities and the necessity of keeping down the rates led some Councillors to review the existing charging system for the usage of facilities. In late 1949, a scheme was proposed to charge for the use of football, hockey and cricket pitches in the municipal parks: people already had to pay for playing bowls, miniature golf and putting, and tennis.<sup>10</sup> Although the Parks Committee found that Bolton stood almost alone in Lancashire in allowing local people to use pitches without charge, the Committee deferred the question.<sup>11</sup> In early 1951, it was again decided that municipal playing pitches should not be charged for.<sup>12</sup> An important reason for not-charging was the lower standard of pitches and accommodation. The Parks Superintendent stated that given the provision of good facilities, such as changing rooms, lighting, baths and showers, the issue should be reconsidered.

This did not mean that there were no improvements in the amenities of public parks during the forties. A nine holes golf course opened in 1947 in Leverhulme Park, the

largest municipal park in Bolton, with the aim of attracting more people to the park. Councillors had been speculating that local people would not spend their spare time in parks where there were few amenities. The scheme was found to be so popular that the numbers of users reached 3,000 soon after its opening.<sup>13</sup> In 1949, eight more tennis courts and one cricket pitch were opened in the municipal parks.<sup>14</sup>

During the Second World War, there were 1,260 allotment plots in Bolton.<sup>15</sup> In 1951, there were 1,276 plots in total. The number of permanent plots increased to 660 in 1951 from 253 in 1946. However, allotments were not so popular in Bolton. The Mayor, Alderman T. P. Dunning, concerned about the 130 un-tenanted plots, felt that this was due to either lack of interest or to the fact that 'people had so many other forms of recreation'.<sup>16</sup>

### Libraries, museums and art gallery

During the Second World War, Bolton, like Coventry, issued record numbers of library books, and for similar reasons. The blackout and restrictions on travelling, produced lack of alternative entertainments.<sup>17</sup> Total issues of Bolton public lending libraries were 1,639,800 for the year 1944-45, which meant that more than nine books per head were borrowed.<sup>18</sup> The total number of Bolton libraries between 1939 and 1951 remained at eight,<sup>19</sup> and Bolton had more branch libraries than other towns of similar size of population.<sup>20</sup> The central library, which had been newly built in 1938 as a part of the civic extension scheme, suffered no war damage. Yet, the quality of Bolton library



services became poorer in the post-war period. After the first post-war annual inspection in 1946, Councillor Dr. H. W. Taylor, the Conservative chairman of the Libraries Committee, admitted that some branch library buildings were suffering from lack of repairs and re-decoration.<sup>21</sup>

Alderman Tong, another prominent Conservative member, noted the disappearance of the story telling service for children, popular before the war.<sup>22</sup> Alderman James Vickers, a leading Labour member, felt that 'Bolton had spent too much on bricks and mortar and too little on the books themselves'.<sup>23</sup>

Under the general economic austerity after 1945, the overall attitude of the Council towards its library services was not so generous as before the war. The ultimate priority was given to housing and education as elsewhere. The Libraries Committee had been spending more than the national average.<sup>24</sup> The Council was keen to cut expenditure even after the Labour secured a majority in 1946.<sup>25</sup> At the annual inspection of the Libraries Committee<sup>26</sup> in 1949, Councillor Conner, the Liberal chairman, complained that the Town Council regarded the libraries, museums and art gallery services as of secondary importance.<sup>27</sup> A local newspaper agreed, commenting that such services would become increasingly important in the period of 'the shorter working week and greater leisure'.<sup>28</sup>

In 1950, Alderman Vickers complained that Bolton library rates levied per head of population was 7s. 5d., as against 4s. 10d. for the 18 Lancashire county boroughs and 4s. 7d. for all the county boroughs in the country. The librarian claimed the actual figure was only 6s. 11d., and

this involved all the libraries, museums and art gallery expenditure.<sup>29</sup> He also emphasised that the loan charges of 1s. 1.75d. were higher than anywhere else. But there was another unfavourable set of statistics for the defenders of library services. Although the stock of books increased to nearly 220,000 in 1949-50 from just over 205,000 in 1944-45,<sup>30</sup> the usage of the libraries in the locality worryingly declined, as Table G in Appendix shows. The figure for home lending issues for the year 1950-51 was just over 1,339,000, a decrease of nearly 300,000 since 1938-39. In 1949, the chief librarian, trying to make sure of it, said 'that 90% of the decrease occurs in the issue of fiction, and that the number of books issued in the non-fiction classes shows an almost negligible decrease on last year'.<sup>31</sup> He blamed 'the five day week, with its consequent redistribution of leisure hours, the various week-end attractions which occupy time which by many was formerly given over to reading, and other social changes'.<sup>32</sup> When he was interviewed by a national daily newspaper, he emphasised that the five day week had caused the unpopularity of weekend reading:

Formerly, when the workers got home on Saturday the day was half over, and they didn't feel like going anywhere... Now they get away into the country for the day on Saturday or leave on Friday night for the weekend. When television is nationwide there will be another big drop in the borrowing of fiction books.<sup>33</sup>

At a following Libraries Committee meeting, Sunday cinemas were blamed.<sup>34</sup> The chairman of the Bolton Cinema Managers' Association felt that they made cinemas a scapegoat: 'it is something entirely new to hear that we are stopping people

reading books because they go to cinema on Sundays'.<sup>35</sup> In his following annual report, the chief librarian repeated the explanation about another drop in the number of lending issues: 'it seems probable that most of the overload of very light reading which developed during the war years and immediately after, when alternative interests were not available, has now been shed'.<sup>36</sup>

Although fiction borrowing from local libraries was in decline, the genre remained the most popular among users. In 1946, a local newspaper reported that light fiction such as thrillers and romances, not classic novels, was the most popular. Local people were also fond of biography, adventure and family chronicles.<sup>37</sup> In 1950, the same newspaper again found that popular demands on local public libraries were for light novels and adventure.<sup>38</sup> The book borrowing public also had a seasonal preference. In summertime, many people stopped reading. Interests in serious literature waned. The peak reading months were March, October and November.<sup>39</sup>

In the early post-war years, Bolton public museums and art gallery, along with libraries, were expected to play important roles as a part of local education services. A central museum and art gallery were accommodated in the civic centre building, in which a central library and an aquarium were also situated. There were two more branch museums: the Chadwick Museum, which concerned local history and whose main holdings were the textile machines of Hargreaves, Arkwright and Crompton; and the Hall i'th' Wood Museum, where Samuel Crompton once lived and the Spinning Mule was invented.<sup>40</sup>

The central museum and art gallery, which were built in 1939, did not open to the public until autumn 1947.<sup>41</sup> The curator claimed that it was the most modern museum in Britain.<sup>42</sup> The Chadwick Museum, which had been used as a school during the war, had also hoped to re-open as soon as possible.<sup>43</sup> But the Town Council found that the opening of the central museum was enough in terms of expenditure. The Conservatives regaining Council control,<sup>44</sup> had no spare money for non-essential work of that kind.<sup>45</sup> The curator regarded the situation of the art gallery as unsatisfactory. It used to be administered by the Parks Committee,<sup>46</sup> whose choice of pictures to buy for permanent collection he thought unwise and dated. He suggested that a new policy for the art gallery should consist of housing touring exhibitions and building up the permanent collection, which should concentrate on English water colours.<sup>47</sup>

The Bolton Town Council showed their commitment to the public art gallery, at least in one way in 1949. Under the Bolton Corporation Act (1949), the Corporation had power to collect public money up to one-fifth of a penny rate each year (approximately £800) for an arts fund to buy English water colours.<sup>48</sup> However, when it came to the actual purchasing of pictures, the opinion of Council members divided. In 1950, when it was proposed to buy a picture painted by a well known artist in the English water colour school, there was narrow-minded opposition against it among members of the Libraries Committee. One member said that he refused the picture because it was of a scene in France.

More typical was that the cost of the picture, which was £85, was too expensive for only one picture.<sup>49</sup>

It was in 1950 that suggestion to cut the expenditure of the museums and the art gallery started to be heard. An unknown former Councillor accused the Bolton museum services of being:

expensive to run, and very few people visit them. If students require to see special collections, ... it is better to pay their fare and see them at Manchester and Liverpool Universities. To house a special collection for the benefit of the odd one or two of the population is extremely expensive and extravagant.<sup>50</sup>

Councillor Dr. Taylor compared rate expenditure on museums and art galleries among neighbouring towns, such as Salford and Rochdale, to find that Bolton spent the most. The 'conclusion cannot be avoided that the cost of the Art Gallery and Museum in Bolton is out of all proportion in comparison with other towns'.<sup>51</sup> Councillor C. H. Lucas, a Labour member, was one of the few who tried to defend the public museums and art gallery services. He complained that there were 'members in the [Libraries] committee who did not think that pictures should be bought at all', despite the fact that there was about £6,000 in the art fund to spend exclusively on them.<sup>52</sup> A Liberal chairman of the Committee, replied that they 'could not just go out and buy £6,000 worth of pictures'.<sup>53</sup> This developed into party politics: a local Liberal Party press officer denounced Councillor Lucas as a 'culture-crazy fanatic', and the press officer of the local Fabian Society defended him.<sup>54</sup>

### The service of youth

In Bolton, the municipal youth service was extended during the Second World War as elsewhere in Britain. In the post-war period, there was a Youth Committee, made up of representatives of local youth organisations, and of the Youth Advisory Panel representing young people themselves. An Annual Youth Drama Festival was organised, and the LEA had a residential youth training centre.<sup>55</sup> In 1948, there were more than 150 groups which were providing youth service facilities in Bolton. They included 10 youth institutes under the control of the LEA, 79 uniformed voluntary organisation groups with over 3,000 members, and some 50 church organisations.<sup>56</sup> Three main political youth organisations, the Bolton Young Conservatives, the Labour League of Youth, and the Bolton League of Young Liberals, also existed.<sup>57</sup> The MoE youth survey of Bolton in 1948 estimated that about 6,000 (60 per cent of the local youth population between 14 and 20 years old) were active members, and that about one-third of those 6,000 belonged to the municipal youth institutes.<sup>58</sup>

The member of youth institute paid two shillings annually, and other voluntary organisations collected subscriptions of between 1d. and 6d. per week on average. The Government survey revealed that apart from the Bolton Recreation Club and the Young Men's Christian Association (YWCA), no other organisations had satisfactory premises and equipment for youth work. For example, the municipal youth institutes were accommodated mostly at the local secondary modern schools.

The membership of each group varied. The Girl Guides had 1,198 members in 1947.<sup>59</sup> The old established Girls' Recreation Club claimed that it had 60 regular attending members in 1945,<sup>60</sup> though total membership in the late forties was about 400 including some 200 junior members between 11 and 14 years old.<sup>61</sup> The Bolton Lad's Club, founded in 1889, claimed a membership of 500 poor working-class boys, though average nightly attendance was about 100.<sup>62</sup> The YMCA had 401 annual and 162 weekly junior members between 14 and 16 years of age in 1947.<sup>63</sup> The Clarendon Street youth institute, although located in an infants' school without modern facilities, claimed 800 members in early 1947, and was probably one of the most popular youth organisations in the locality during the 1940s.<sup>64</sup> It had more members than all of the other four youth organisations situated within a half mile.<sup>65</sup> One element which determined the popularity of youth organisations was believed to be the fact that they were mixed. The Hill youth institute found that, on a Friday night when girl friends were allowed, the attendance reached more than double the usual figure.<sup>66</sup> The Brownslow Fold Club, which had been a boys only club, reported that after being changed into a mixed club, the numbers enrolled increased substantially.<sup>67</sup> The Girl Recreation Club experienced a marked drop in attendance after it excluded boys from any activity.<sup>68</sup>

The Government survey pointed out that membership of local youth organisations generally fell off at 17 to 18 years of age.<sup>69</sup> And in Bolton, as in Coventry, the ideal of

youth service was never realised. The survey could not find any sign that responsible young citizens, who were expected to grow through the youth service, were emerging in Bolton:

During the Survey little evidence was seen of sustained effort by Groups to provide experience and training for their members in self-government and in arranging programmes. Generally, programmes are arranged by the adult Leaders, and the members neither have the opportunity nor the desire to assume any form of responsibility.

Activities of a purely recreational nature are very popular. Although the Local Education Authority have always been eager to provide help and instructions for the more educational and purposeful activities such as crafts, drama, music and physical recreation, relatively few members avail themselves of the opportunities.<sup>70</sup>

It is true that activities of 'purely recreational nature' were more popular than any other activities. At the Bolton Lad's Club, indoor activities such as table tennis, billiards, chess, and draughts, and recreational sports such as gymnastics and football were far more popular than drama, music and handicraft classes.<sup>71</sup> It was the same of the Girl Recreation Club: the members, especially those working in the local mills, came to the club chiefly for relaxation and sociability.<sup>72</sup> However, there was some evidence that those who criticised the passive young person had little understanding of what ordinary teenagers needed. The Bolton Lad's Club was a case in point. The full time warden criticised the governing committee whose members were out of touch with boys who lived in poor working-class area:

... the Chairman, ... Headmaster of Bolton School, never makes one appearance except at the annual committee meeting. He doesn't allow any of his boys to mix up with my lads or come into the club. He runs the Bolton School with a terrific staff



and a cleverest type of lad - he gives us the impression that this is a branch of Bolton School and is run on similar lines which is of course ridiculous... My own opinion is the club could be run much better if it was directed by the Local Education Authority.<sup>73</sup>

However, contrary to the experience of Coventry, this kind of criticism never appeared in the local newspapers. It is true that there were occasional reports on hooliganism and vandalism.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, there was almost no public discussion in Bolton about whether existing youth facilities were good enough or not. Demands for establishing more sophisticated youth facilities, parallel to those for a youth cafe in Coventry and a youth drug store in Luton, never surfaced.<sup>75</sup> And why should it? As one juvenile delinquency statistics showed, 'that Bolton is one of few towns in the country where this is not a serious and urgent problem'.<sup>76</sup>

### Civic entertainments

It was after Labour got a clear majority in the local elections of November 1946 that several new plans of municipal trading were tried.<sup>77</sup> At first, along with civic restaurants management, the possibility of municipal provision of a civic cinema and theatre was discussed.<sup>78</sup> A few months after that, members of Bolton Town Council visited Leeds, and were quite impressed by the experiment of the 'Winter Gardens' provided by the Leeds Council every Sunday. This involved a programme of music, variety and refreshments.<sup>79</sup> The idea of a 'Winter Gardens' was strongly

supported by Alderman Vickers, then the powerful chairman of the Finance Committee, who looked:

forward to seeing crowds of happy people, meeting, as a matter of course, "beneath the clock" for a pleasant evening's entertainment and the "Winter Gardens" will, he hopes, be the starting point of more ambitious schemes of civic entertainments.<sup>80</sup>

The first "Winter Gardens" was held at the Albert Hall on the last Sunday in September 1947 by the Concert Sub-Committee of the Finance Committee, with a set decorated by the Parks Department and light refreshments served by the Civic Restaurants Committee. A "Winter Gardens" event was subsequently held on every Sunday throughout the autumn and winter, from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., with a charge of 1s. for adults and 6d. for children. Local newspapers reported that the experiment was very successful throughout the 1940s, often attracting audiences of 1,000 or more.<sup>81</sup> The Concert Sub-Committee also launched popular civic dances on Saturday evenings in 1948.<sup>82</sup> Their expenditure was very small. For 1947-48, it cost just over £315.<sup>83</sup> However, under Section 132 of the Local Government Act, 1948, Bolton Town Council set up a standing committee, the Entertainments Committee, in July 1949.<sup>84</sup> This happened after the 1949 local election, in which the Conservatives re-gained control after two and half years.<sup>85</sup> The first chairman was Councillor Edwin Taylor, a Conservative local shop keeper.<sup>86</sup>

The Conservative controlled Council were happy in providing entertainments and in supporting local entertainments and cultural activities. The Entertainments Committee was keen to be democratic, by getting suggestions

from local people about its policy. It co-opted three citizens, who were not Council members, to the Committee.<sup>87</sup> The Town Council also showed generosity in spending public money for entertainments. The Committee's net expenditure for its first year, 1949-50, amounted to £1,800,<sup>88</sup> which was nearly twice as much as that estimated and approved by the Finance Committee before the year started,<sup>89</sup> and was more than five times as much as that of the Concert Sub-Committee for 1947-48 under the Labour Council. Nevertheless, this was still significantly lower than the equivalent of a sixpenny rate, which would have amounted to approximately £25,000 a year in Bolton at that time, though we should remember that almost all the County Boroughs, other than seaside resorts, never made full use of their powers under the Local Government Act, 1948.<sup>90</sup> The total expenditure of the Bolton Entertainments Committee was no more than a penny rate in 1950.<sup>91</sup>

It is true that the Entertainments Committee was anxious to make everything pay, and losses were to be covered, as much as possible, by profits made on the most popular events, such as the 'Winter Garden' and civic dances. The Chairman told a local newspaper that the Entertainments Committee would be unpopular, if it was to 'add anything to the rates'.<sup>92</sup> A local newspaper criticised this attitude:

Any committee which exercises due economy and avoids the temptations of extravagance is to be applauded, but that does not mean that parsimony and niggardliness are to be approved. Bolton Entertainments Committee has a great opportunity to provide the best kind of entertainments in

Bolton but is already worried about losing a matter of £10 and £20.<sup>93</sup>

In fact, the Entertainments Committee under the Conservatives expanded its programmes though modestly.<sup>94</sup> In July 1949, the Committee agreed to reimburse the Halle Concerts Society, Manchester, for any loss incurred at a Halle Orchestra concert up to a £100.<sup>95</sup> Significantly, this kind of guarantee was made for the first time by Bolton Corporation. A few months later, the Committee also gave a guarantee for the loss of up to £150 to a Royal Philharmonic Orchestra concert.<sup>96</sup> It also started to give a grant to the Bolton Choral Union.

For season 1950-51, the Committee organised extensive events. 40 band concerts, 13 concert parties, seven Punch and Judy shows, and four open-air dramatic performances given by a semi-professional local society, the Bolton Little Theatre, were provided during the summer season,<sup>97</sup> though it was less large scale than those similar events organised during wartime for the stay-at-home holiday makers.<sup>98</sup> For the winter season, the Committee managed to provide weekly "Winter Gardens", three organ recitals, four celebrity concerts, eight chamber concerts, ten lunch-time concerts, and 12 civic dances.<sup>99</sup> Further progressive gestures towards serious orchestral concerts were made public. In 1949, the Entertainments Committee resolved to extend its guarantee for the orchestral music played by the Halle Orchestra at the Victoria Hall, reimbursing a loss of up to £200 for each of four concerts.<sup>100</sup> The Bolton Town Council, however, referred it back for further

consideration. The Committee changed its resolution and decided to give a £1,000 block grant for the season 1950-51.<sup>101</sup> Another grant of £200 to the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra was also agreed.<sup>102</sup>

The Committee were also prepared to give small grants to local societies and organisations.<sup>103</sup> Some events were organised in cooperation with other departments, such as the parks and library departments. Chamber concerts were held at the Lecture Theatre and lunch time recitals at the Small Lecture Theatre,<sup>104</sup> both in the Central library. From the winter of 1948, a late night dance bus service started to support the civic dances.<sup>105</sup> Several more ambitious plans were suggested by local cultural organisations. In 1949, the Chairman of the Bolton Orchestra pressed the Entertainments Committee to hold a Bolton Music and Drama Festival, claiming that grants to the Halle Orchestra and Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra were not enough to appeal to the public.<sup>106</sup> The Director of Music of Bolton School suggested the establishment of a municipal orchestra.<sup>107</sup> The Entertainments Committee rejected both.<sup>108</sup> There was another proposal for the setting up of a local Arts Council. However, the plan was eventually abandoned, partly due to sectarian attitudes among local cultural organisations.<sup>109</sup>

Compared with Coventry, there was far less tension in Bolton between the Town Council and the local entrepreneurs over the question of leisure in the post-war forties. A difficulty occurred, however, when the Concerts Sub-Committee of the Finance Committee tried to put on civic dances for the winter of 1948-49, following the success of

the "Winter Gardens" event. Although the proprietors of the dance halls were not against the idea of the 'public dance' itself, they regarded the proposed liquor licences and the extension of music and dancing after 11.00 p.m. on Saturday nights as a threat to their business. Thus, a protest was organised by the Dance Hall Proprietors' Association.<sup>110</sup> Bolton Council ignored the protest and planned to hold its first civic dance at the Albert Hall, with a licensed bar, on 16th October 1948. A church and three dance halls in the city centre still opposed the plan. The solicitor of a local church attacked the plan as a bread and circus policy.<sup>111</sup> Eventually, the Borough Magistrates declined the application for the drink licence from 7.30 p.m. - 11.00 p.m. and the extension of the music and dancing licence from 11.00 p.m. to 11.45 p.m.<sup>112</sup>

In response, Bolton Council cancelled its original plan, but soon decided to hold the civic dances without a liquor licence. This was successful. In early 1949, Alderman Vickers happily told a local newspaper that he was going to propose that the civic dances should be held every Saturday night. He said that more young people were attracted by the civic dances even if dry, and that he was very impressed with the conduct of the young persons turned up.<sup>113</sup> The civic dance scheme was popular and profitable. For the season 1950-51, there were alternate ballroom dances and Modern Square dances on Saturdays and Wednesdays. Tickets were 3s. 6d. for the weekend event, and 2s. for mid-week.<sup>114</sup>

The newly established Entertainments Committee once sought cooperation with the owners of the local commercial

theatres and cinemas. At the end of 1949, the Committee resolved that its Director of Entertainments should approach the managers of both theatres and cinemas.<sup>115</sup> The Committee intended to support the first class theatrical and film shows in the locality, guaranteeing the management against loss. The Committee had generally felt the lack of 'high culture' in the field of drama and films in Bolton. However, both attempts were unsuccessful. For example, the Director of Entertainments interviewed two local cinema exhibitors with regard to the showing of foreign language films. It was unsuccessful because the Empire Cinema at Howard Street, was planning to exhibit the foreign films on a commercial basis. The Entertainments Committee withdrew its initiative.<sup>116</sup> The Committee under Conservative control had no intention to intervene in a sphere where commercial trades were already established. When cooperation with commercial entrepreneurs was once again proposed, the Conservative chairman of the Entertainments Committee stated: 'I don't think it is our duty to butt-in on a commercial enterprise'.<sup>117</sup> A Councillor on the Entertainments Committee even viewed that music orchestras of the first class were business concerns, so grants to these bodies should not be allowed.<sup>118</sup>

### Sunday cinemas

During the Second World War, the British Government agreed that local authorities could open cinemas on Sundays without a local poll, at least where the demands from the military were strong. Bolton, however, was one of few minority authorities which refused.<sup>119</sup> Local supporters of Sunday

cinema opening began to take the offensive around the end of the war. A women wrote to a local newspaper complaining that there was no inexpensive place to enjoy on Sunday evenings:

... on Sunday nights when most young people are at a loose end, or to canvass the Sunday bus queues on their way to pictures at Bury and Manchester or the concert at Chorley. ... two hours in a public house must be much more expensive than two hours in the pictures.<sup>120</sup>

The Secretary of the League of Youth, a Labour Party organisation, attacked Bolton puritanism saying that the young people did not want to go church.<sup>121</sup> The local Watch Committee, however, refused applications for Sunday cinemas from the Bolton Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association in May 1945.<sup>122</sup> The Bolton Town Council supported this refusal, though narrowly, by 33 votes to 26 in June and 35 votes to 29 in December 1945.<sup>123</sup>

After Sunday games on the municipal parks were permitted in May 1946, the subject of Sunday cinemas was again discussed just before the autumn local elections. Councillor Edwards submitted a petition in favour signed by more than 20,000 residents. Councillor Connor handed a petition against with 8,350 signatures. The latter argued that this proposal was 'a Labour tactical move prepared for the forthcoming elections' and believed that it was 'the communist outlook using the Labour group as a vehicle of expression for their ideology'.<sup>124</sup> The proposal was a modest one, just insisting that Sunday cinemas should open from 8 p.m. The Council approved of the principle by 42 votes to 23 in October 1946.<sup>125</sup> This meant that, under the



Sunday Entertainments Act of 1932, a public meeting and a local poll had to be held to decide the issue finally. At a town meeting, two-thirds of a 1,000 audience voted against the Sunday openings.<sup>126</sup> However, at the local poll in December 1946, the result was almost the reverse. The proposal passed by 28,999 votes to 17,601.<sup>127</sup>

One local newspaper regarded Sunday opening of the cinemas as a desirable and a necessary measure in keeping young persons off the streets.

The vast majority have nothing to do save the easy and casual sociality [sic] of Bradshawgate, Deansgate and other streets. Bradshawgate walking was considered a social evil 50 years ago, but except for touching the fringe of it with Sunday Hippodrome, the young people's clubs and associations, Bolton had done nothing to meet it except express pious regrets.<sup>128</sup>

The Watch Committee decided that Sunday films were to be shown between 4.30 p.m. and 10.30 p.m. and in May 1947 the first Sunday film was shown in Bolton.<sup>129</sup> A Mass-Observer reported that Sunday cinema was one of the few attractions on Sundays along with the pubs, no wonder it was popular.<sup>130</sup>

## 2. Provision of Commercial Leisure

The local commercial leisure world in Bolton survived the Second World War without any serious damage. As the Table I in the Appendix shows, the total numbers of places where people could get alcoholic drink remained almost unchanged. It is only in 1950 that we can observe a few definitive changes in the trend of provision of drinking places for the first time in the post-war period with the number of on-

licensed pubs declining and that of the off-licensed increasing. Most pubs which closed were outside the city centre: in the city centre, there was only one closure during the period.<sup>131</sup>

A Mass-Observation survey conducted in the late forties revealed that the overwhelming majority of public houses and off-licensed shops were tied: there were only 10 free houses out of 273, and 38 free off-licences out of 150.<sup>132</sup> It was a local brewery, the Magee, Marshall and Company Ltd., which owned the largest number of both tied public houses and off-licence shops. The company controlled 81 public houses and 43 off-licences.<sup>133</sup> Pubs did not escape the effects of austerity. For example, from July 1946, following the Government's rationing of beer on the first of May, local brewers and licensed victuallers' organisation agreed to open their public houses only between 8.30 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. everyday with additional opening times from 12.00 to 1.00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.<sup>134</sup> In 1951, the last family brewers in the Bolton district was sold with its 42 public houses in Bolton to an outsider. Mr. John Hamer, the former owner of the brewery explained that he felt that 'running a business under present day control and regulation is very exacting'.<sup>135</sup>

However, there was ample evidence to suggest that in Bolton, pubs were still the main attraction in people's leisure at that time. A Mass-Observation survey noted that in 'Bolton before the war, money was fairly scarce and beer was plentiful. In 1947 beer was fairly scarce and money was plentiful'.<sup>136</sup> Compared to the situation before the war,

according to another Mass-Observation survey, the frequency of the visits did not change much in the post-war period.<sup>137</sup> In the late 1940s, it was estimated that 64 per cent of the population in Bolton were pub-goers.<sup>138</sup> Only about a third of the pub-going public were women.<sup>139</sup> However, the increased presence of women in pubs was reported, not just at weekends as in pre-war periods, but also on weekdays.<sup>140</sup> Among the regular pub-goers, especially those who were single men, spending on beer was considerable. The Mass-Observation survey reported that two working-class regulars of a small back street pub in Bolton, a 30 years old engineer and a 39 years old plumber, spent more than 20 per cent of their weekly earnings on beer.<sup>141</sup> On Sunday evenings, pubs were more popular than churches, and the drinking at the pub became more a family matter than on weekdays.<sup>142</sup>

Apart from drinking, games, street bookies and betting were common features of Bolton pubs, as elsewhere in the country.<sup>143</sup> The main reasons for going to the pubs in Bolton were more than just to get a drink: for the company, for a change, to pass the time, and for relaxation.<sup>144</sup> A local man told a Mass-Observer about his wife's pub-going:

My missus and me, we likes to go and have one [pint of beer] when there's a bit of singing going on. The missus meets people that she knows and you know what women are when they talk about shopping and do a bit of grumbling about the Government. Well, as she says afterwards, she's better for the change mixing with them.<sup>145</sup>

According to the Mass-Observation survey, Bolton was a part of the national trend of the public house whose atmosphere

and roles were gradually changing: the movement away from a place for a drink as an end itself towards a social centre.<sup>146</sup> The survey suggested that the increased presence of women and young customers was a strong element in modernising the pubs. The survey further noted that prostitution in local pubs had died out in Bolton because of the increased presence of women, although there was a sort of casual prostitution still going on.<sup>147</sup>

How was the off-licensed business? In 1948, a Mass-Observation survey found that only a dozen out of the 135 off-licensed shops in Bolton<sup>148</sup> specialised in sales of drinks. The overwhelming majority were 'very small grocery, haberdashery, confectionery, cigarette or pharmaceutical packed brand products (toothpaste, cream etc) shops'.<sup>149</sup> It further reported that in the crowded working-class residential areas three such shops existed within a few hundreds yards, frequently facing public houses. Home drinking was not yet a majority experience in the late forties Bolton.<sup>150</sup>

There were few changes in the local cinema and theatre trade. The number of licensed cinemas registered by the local authority was 23 in 1946 and remained at 21 between 1947 and 1954.<sup>151</sup> However, the actual number of commercial cinemas was 21 when the Second World War finished. The only commercial cinema which was closed down in the 1940s was a town centre cinema, the Embassy (formerly Imperial Playhouse) at Deansgate.<sup>152</sup> Another town centre cinema, the Theatre Royal at Churchgate, which had been used to show

films since 1930, started to stage live theatrical performances in 1946, when a successful summer show ran eight months.<sup>153</sup> But in the following year, a similar attempt failed to achieve a good box office. It was re-converted into a cinema in the same year.<sup>154</sup> In 1948, once again, a live show was tried under the new lessee, the John Buckley Circuit, which owned the Lido and the Regal cinemas in the 1940s.<sup>155</sup> However, after some time, the Theatre Royal, which would never succeed in specialising as a live theatre, returned to a cinema, with occasional live shows.<sup>156</sup> Total seating capacity of local cinemas was estimated at approximately 24,000.<sup>157</sup> The main cinemas used to open their premises in the early afternoon on weekdays, and in the evening on Sundays.<sup>158</sup>

There were three commercial theatres which provided regular or occasional live performances. All were in the town centre. The Hippodrome, in Deansgate, had offered theatrical plays by its repertory company, the Lawrence Williamson Repertory Players. The repertory company took over the Hippodrome in 1940 before when it had been a cinema.<sup>159</sup> The Grand Theatre, also at Churchgate, provided variety shows and revues throughout the year.<sup>160</sup> The Bolton Theatre and Entertainments Co. Ltd. owned all these three commercial theatres. The Theatre Royal offered the best straight dramas in terms of artistic quality among these three local theatres, with high prices of between 1s. 6d. and 7s. 6d., while the prices of the Grand Theatre were 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d.<sup>161</sup> Although it was said that 10,000 to 15,000 weekly attendances were required to maintain a

commercial live theatre, there was certainly never that level of support in Bolton.<sup>162</sup>

In the early 1950s, there were four large dance halls and several small ones in Bolton.<sup>163</sup> A local newspaper printed a regular column on dance, alongside those on cinema and gardening. Four dance schools also irregularly advertised in the newspaper during the period.<sup>164</sup> In 1947, a local newspaper claimed that dancing in Bolton was 'as necessary a relaxation as a cigarette, walking, reading and listening to the wireless'.<sup>165</sup> In Bolton, music related enterprises seemed to do fairly good business. A local dealer said that the post-war gramophone record business had been 'brisk' in 1950, when long playing records were available for the first time.<sup>166</sup> However, the number of other entertainment premises which were given licences for activities such as music, and public billiards and bowls, hardly changed during the period.<sup>167</sup>

There were also many commercial sports facilities in Bolton. In 1948, There were four 18 hole golf courses, in addition to a municipal one.<sup>168</sup> Many private tennis clubs existed, too.<sup>169</sup> However, the most popular commercial sport was not a participatory one. It was the Bolton Wanderers Football Club. On March 9, 1946, when Bolton Wanderers played the second leg of the sixth round of the FA Cup against Stoke City at Burnden Park, Bolton, 65,419 spectators gathered. It was the highest attendance for the Wanderers in post-war home matches.<sup>170</sup> The match ended in disaster when 33 spectators died when the crowd pressed forward and two barriers collapsed. The Home Secretary

ordered an enquiry, and it was discovered that some 85,000 people had tried to attend the match.<sup>171</sup> It was claimed that the club attracted between 20,000 and 40,000 spectators to its first team home matches.<sup>172</sup> A local newspaper remarked on its popularity:

It is strange commentary on our modern way of life that a football team like the Wanderers may do more to foster the sense of community in Bolton than does a governing body like the Town Council. We may regret this, but we can scarcely deny it.<sup>173</sup>

It is not surprising that the local authority twice wondered if Wanderers should become a municipal football club.<sup>174</sup>

Boxing and wrestling matches were occasionally promoted in the locality. Bolton had a greyhound racing track which and opened two nights each week.<sup>175</sup> As in Coventry, the annual totalisator turnover in Bolton reached its peak in 1946.<sup>176</sup> Of this downward trend, Mr. C. Williams, secretary of the Bolton Greyhound Racing Company blamed the Government:

In 1946, we were racing on Wednesdays and as well as Saturdays. Now racing is Saturdays only. ... The cancellation of mid-week racing cut our figures by 40%, and since 1946 the betting tax has come into operation. Its effect in the first 3 months was a further 45% drop in tote turnover. Our experience shows the tote tax is a failure and is only having the effect of turning more betting to the book makers.<sup>177</sup>

## Notes to Chapter 6

- 1 BEN, 23 October 1946.
- 2 H. Hamer (ed.), *The Book of Bolton* (1948), p. 51.
- 3 Ibid., p. 52.
- 4 As a result of the 1945 municipal election, Labour gained 17 without any loss, Conservatives and Liberals lost 10 and 7 respectively. Labour secured 16 chairmanships and vice-chairmanships out of the total of 17 standing committees of the Council. See, *The Times*, 2 November 1945 and BEN, 13 November 1945.
- 5 BJG, 8 March 1946.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 BJG, 3 May 1946.
- 8 BJG, 12 September 1947.
- 9 BJG, 12 November 1948.
- 10 BJG, 23 February 1951.
- 11 BJG, 23 December 1949.
- 12 BJG, 23 February 1951.
- 13 BJG, 6 December 1946 and 4 July 1947.
- 14 BJG, 14 April 1949.
- 15 BJG, 31 July 1953.
- 16 BJG, 27 July 1951.
- 17 T. Dunne, *Bolton Public Libraries 1853-1978* (Bolton 1978), p. 37.
- 18 BCLA, ABCF/12/11, 'Draft of 92nd Annual Report, 12 October 1944-11 October 1945'.
- 19 CBB, *Annual Report of the Public Libraries* (various years).
- 20 BCLA, ABCF/12/11, 'Draft Report of the Finance Special Sub-Committee appointed to review the various services of the Council', 1952.
- 21 BEN, 19 July 1946.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 BS, 2 September 1948.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 T. Dunne, 'A History of Public Libraries in Bolton from the Beginnings to 1974' (unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Stathclyde, 1981), p. 809.
- 26 Although the Libraries Committee was responsible for not only libraries but also for museums and the art gallery, the name of the Committee did not change until 1954, when it became 'Libraries, Museums and Art Gallery Committee'.
- 27 BJG, 19 August 1949.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 BEN, 28 March 1950.
- 30 CBB, *Annual Report of the Public Libraries* (various years).
- 31 Bolton Public Libraries, *Ninety-Sixth Annual Report of the Public Libraries, 1948-49* (1949), p. 3.
- 32 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
- 33 *Daily Mirror*, 24 March 1950, quoted in Dunne's unpublished D.Phil thesis, 'A History of Public Libraries', p. 806.
- 34 BEN, 28 March 1950.
- 35 BEN, 29 March 1950.



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- 36 Bolton Public Libraries, *Ninety-Seventh Annual Report of the Public Libraries, 1949-50* (1950), pp. 3-4.
  - 37 BEN, 24 July 1946.
  - 38 BEN, 14 January 1950.
  - 39 BEN, 19 July 1947.
  - 40 Hamer, *The Book of Bolton* (1948), p. 48.
  - 41 BEN, 17 October 1947; Dunne, 'A History of Public Libraries', p. 814.
  - 42 BEN, 26 September 1947.
  - 43 Ibid.
  - 44 The election took place in May 1949. Conservatives secured 46 seats, Labour 40 and Liberals 6. *The Times*, 13 May 1949.
  - 45 BJG, 19 August 1949.
  - 46 BJG, 28 July 1950.
  - 47 BEN, 26 September 1947.
  - 48 BJG, 28 July 1950.
  - 49 Ibid.
  - 50 BS, 27 April 1950.
  - 51 BS, 2 November 1950.
  - 52 BEN, 22 August 1950.
  - 53 Ibid.
  - 54 Dunne, 'A History of Public Libraries', pp. 812-13.
  - 55 Hamer, *The Book of Bolton* (1948), p. 44. This centre was a wartime product. In 1943, a house was hired for two weeks to accommodate guest friends from youth clubs in Lincoln and for a residential course for members of youth organisations in Bolton. After several successful experiences, the LEA took over a house as a permanent residential youth centre: PRO, ED 149/152, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on the New Overdale Youth Training Centre, Bolton. Inspected during 1956-57', p. 2.
  - 56 BCLA, ABCF/4/5, MoE, 'General Area Survey of Youth Service in the County Borough of Bolton' (1948), p. 6.
  - 57 BJG, 25 October 1946 and 7 February 1947.
  - 58 BCLA, ABCF/4/5, MoE, 'General Area Survey' (1948), p. 7.
  - 59 BJG, 7 February 1947.
  - 60 BJG, 2 March 1945.
  - 61 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Beveridge Social Services Surveys, Box 2, File H.
  - 62 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Beveridge Social Services Surveys, Box 2, File H.
  - 63 BJG, 18 April 1947.
  - 64 BJG, 17 January 1947.
  - 65 BJG, 2 March 1945.
  - 66 BJG, 31 January 1947.
  - 67 BJG, 14 February 1947.
  - 68 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Beveridge Social Services Surveys, Box 2, File H.
  - 69 The proportion of municipal youth institute membership over 17 years of age was less than half of that of other local voluntary organisations. See, BCLA, ABCF/4/5, MoE, 'General Area Survey' (1948), p. 7.
  - 70 BCLA, ABCF/4/5, MoE, 'General Area Survey' (1948), p. 9. However, there were newspaper reports in 1946 and 47 that purely recreational activities were less popular

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- than other activities. See, *BJG*, 6 December 1946 and 14 February 1947.
- 71 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Beveridge Social Services Surveys, Box 2, File H.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 For examples, see, *BJG*, 23 January and 28 May 1948.
- 75 On the reaction to these attempts, see *BJG*, 15 November 1946 and 16 April 1948.
- 76 *BJG*, 29 July 1949.
- 77 On the first post-war Labour victory in a Bolton local election, see *BJG*, 8 November 1946.
- 78 *BJG*, 29 November 1946.
- 79 *BJG*, 21 February 1947.
- 80 *BJG*, 8 August 1947; *Bolton Standard*, 7 August 1947.
- 81 *BEN*, 29 September 1947; *BJG*, 3 October 1947; *BEN*, 13 September 1948; *BJG*, 16 September 1949; *BJG*, 21 October 1949.
- 82 *BJG*, 1 October 1948 and 28 January 1949.
- 83 See the column, 'expenditure on "civic entertainments"', General Rate Fund, Finance Department, in CBB, *Abstract of the Treasurer's Accounts for the Year ended 31st March, 1948*.
- 84 BCLA, AB/30/1, minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 24 May 1949.
- 85 *The Times*, 13 May 1949. The results of the local election in May 1949 were: Conservative 12 seats, Labour 10, and Liberal 2. Conservatives gained four from Labour. New Bolton Council was 46 Conservatives, 40 Labour and 6 Liberals.
- 86 *BJG*, 27 May 1949.
- 87 *BJG*, 17 August 1949.
- 88 CBB, *Abstract of the Treasurer's Accounts for the Year ended 31st March, 1950*.
- 89 *BJG*, 16 September 1949.
- 90 Institute of Municipal Entertainment, *A Survey of Municipal Entertainment in England and Wales for the Two Years 1947-48 and 1961-62* (1964), pp. 2-13.
- 91 BCLA, ABCF/1/5, minutes of the meeting of representatives of local societies engaged in promoting the practice and appreciation of Arts, relating desirability of forming a local Arts Council, 4 December 1950.
- 92 *BJG*, 16 September 1949.
- 93 *BJG*, 4 November 1949.
- 94 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 14 September 1949.
- 95 Ibid., 29 July 1949.
- 96 Ibid., 16 September 1949.
- 97 BCLA, ABCF/1/3, 'Schedule of tenders for bands, concert parties and Punch and Judy shows', December 1949. See also, CBB, Entertainments Committee, *Summer Entertainments in the Parks 1950*, and BCLA, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 13 December 1949.
- 98 See, CBB, *Holidays at Home 1942, Souvenir Programme*.
- 99 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 13 December 1949. The lunch-time concerts were very

- popular when launched. The Lecture Theatre at the Central library was reportedly full. See, *BEN*, 14 June 1950 and *BS*, 5 October 1950.
- 100 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 16 September and 13 December 1949.
- 101 Ibid., 17 January 1950.
- 102 Ibid., 7 February 1950.
- 103 Ibid., 13 December 1949. See also, CBB, Entertainments Committee, *Diary of Events, Winter Season, 1951-52*.
- 104 The lunch time recitals were claimed to be popular, with attendances of 200 on average for the summer of 1950. *BJG*, 16 June 1950.
- 105 *BJG*, 10 June 1949.
- 106 BCLA, ABCF/1/3, letter, C. E. Whitebread to the Entertainments Committee, 1 June 1949.
- 107 BCLA, ABCF/1/3, letter, P. A. S. Stenens to the Entertainments Committee, 5 July 1949.
- 108 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 13 July 1949.
- 109 *BEN*, 5 and 15 December 1950.
- 110 *BJG*, 6 February 1948.
- 111 *BJG*, 1 October 1948.
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 *BJG*, 28 January 1949.
- 114 BCLA, ABEN/3/1, *Civic Entertainments, Winter Season 1950-51*.
- 115 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 13 December 1949.
- 116 Ibid., 13 June 1950.
- 117 BCLA, ABCF/1/5, minutes of the meeting of representatives of local societies engaged in promoting the practice and appreciation of Arts, relating the desirability of forming a local Arts Council, 4 December 1950.
- 118 *BJG*, 21 September 1951.
- 119 On this question, see Hideo Ichihashi, 'Leisure Policies for War Workers 1939-1945, with Special reference to Coventry' (unpublished MA Thesis, University of Warwick, 1990), pp. 44-47.
- 120 *BJG*, 27 April 1945.
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 *BJG*, 20 April and 25 May 1945. At this time. the National Association of Theatrical and Kine Employees and the Lord's Day Observance Society announced their opposition to the proposal.
- 123 *BJG*, 8 June and 7 December 1945..
- 124 *BJG*, 4 October 1946.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 *BJG*, 22 November 1946.
- 127 *BJG*, 13 December 1946.
- 128 Ibid.
- 129 *BJG*, 21 March and 23 May 1947.
- 130 Mass-Observation, *Meet Yourself on Sunday* (1949), pp. 31-32.
- 131 It was the Lever Arms Hotel, which was to be replaced by the Pack Horse Hotel in 1952. See, G. Readyhough,

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- Pubs of Bolton Town Centre 1900-1986* (Bolton, 1986), p. 18.
- 132 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Drinking Habits, 1948, Box 12, File E, 'Licensing Statistics, Bolton' [1947]. There was a slight discrepancy of the total numbers both of the on- and off-licensed premises in Bolton between the Mass-Observation survey and the Bolton Chief Constable's annual report.
- 133 Ibid.
- 134 *BJG*, 19 July 1946.
- 135 *BJG*, 29 June 1951.
- 136 Mass-Observation Archive, File Report 3029, A Report on Drinking Habits, 1948, p. 90.
- 137 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Leisure, Box 2, File G.
- 138 Mass-Observation Archive, File Report 3029, A Report on Drinking Habits, 1948, Table 4.
- 139 Ibid., Table 5.
- 140 Ibid., pp. 46-54.
- 141 Ibid., p. 97.
- 142 Mass-Observation, *Meet Yourself* (1949), pp. 31-32.
- 143 Mass-Observation Archive, File Report 3029, A Report on Drinking Habits, 1948, pp. 113 and 119-21.
- 144 Ibid., pp. 132-33.
- 145 Ibid., p. 134.
- 146 Ibid., pp. 309-11.
- 147 Ibid., p. 122.
- 148 According to *The Annual Report of the Chief Constable Year ended, 31st December 1948*, there were 155 off-licensed premises in the locality.
- 149 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Drinking Habits, Box 10, File A, 'A Report on Home Drinking in Bolton', 1 March 1948.
- 150 The Mass-Observation survey estimated about 40 per cent of the Boltonians population drank at home either regularly or occasionally. Mass-Observation, File Report 3029, A Report on Drinking Habits, Table 8.
- 151 CBB, *Annual Report of the Chief Constable* (various years).
- 152 *BEN*, 24 August 1959. It became a Littlewood store, before being demolished in 1959: *BEN*, 24 August 1959 and 24 December 1970.
- 153 *BJG*, 1 February 1957.
- 154 Ibid.
- 155 *BS*, 19 August 1948; *BEN*, 17 September 1952.
- 156 *BJG*, 1 February 1957.
- 157 This figure was for 20 cinemas. C. Chisholm (ed.), *Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom* (1951 edition), p. 127.
- 158 *BJG*, passim, 1945 - 51.
- 159 *BEN*, 21 January 1961.
- 160 C. H. Saxelby (ed.), *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 106. A brief history of the Hippodrome can be found in *BJG*, 23 February 1950.
- 161 On prices, for example, see advertisements in a local newspaper, *BJG*, 13 January 1950.
- 162 *BJG*, 27 August 1948.

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- 163 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 108.  
164 *BJG*, passim, 1946 - 1951.  
165 *BJG*, 25 April 1947.  
166 *BJG*, 26 May 1950.  
167 *Annual Report of the Chief Constable* (various years).  
168 Hamer, *The Book of Bolton* (1948), p. 52. A local golf school and retailer advertised seven lessons for 20/-, saying that starting golf was not expensive, 'if you purchase equipment as you learn and take lessons'; *BJG*, 21 January 1949.  
169 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 108.  
170 P. M. Young, *Bolton Wanderers* (1961), Appendix 3.  
171 *Ibid.*, pp. 138-40.  
172 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 108.  
173 *BJG*, 21 January 1949.  
174 *BEN*, 10 November 1947; *BJG*, 15 and 22 September 1950.  
175 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 109.  
176 See, Table K in the Appendix.  
177 *BJG*, 30 April 1948.

## Chapter 7: Associational and Home-Based Leisure, Coventry and Bolton, 1945-51

In this chapter, less commercialised and more informal aspects of leisure in both Coventry and Bolton are to be discussed. The aim is to look first at voluntary leisure activity in associational forms. There are many common features as well as contrasts between the two towns. Secondly, although written sources are scarce, especially for Bolton, some aspects of home based leisure will be explored. Finally, local events, trips and holiday habits are to be examined.

### Work's recreation

Most large firms in Coventry had their social and recreational facilities and provisions for their employees since before the Second World War. They had begun experiments based on the paternalistic tradition of manufacturers in the 19th century, and in between the wars, the experiments became regarded as a safety valve against threats to labour unrest, at first, and then afterwards, as an effective magnet to recruit and keep a skilled labour force.<sup>1</sup>

Facilities such as canteens,<sup>2</sup> licensed clubs,<sup>3</sup> recreation grounds and ballrooms were established between the wars by large scale manufacturing companies. Various activities of a sporting, cultural, recreational and social character were organised, both on a daily and a seasonal basis. In 1934, The Coventry Works Sports Association was

formed,<sup>4</sup> and inter-factory activities were routinised. Although these activities were not exclusively for their own employees,<sup>5</sup> the largest number who benefited were certainly those employees in the large factories who had priority in using the superb recreational facilities at the cost or a small subscription.<sup>6</sup>

Immediately after the war, the total number of municipal sports grounds available for the public was only slightly greater than the number of the total of those at the larger works.<sup>7</sup> The President of the Ramblers' Cricket Club in Coventry criticised the Corporation's attitude towards the game: "Where can you play cricket in Coventry today if you are not a member of a works team?"<sup>8</sup> It was not the LEA but the factory managers who tried to meet the sporting-minded girls' need. Even in 1953, Mr. W. L. Chinn, Director of Education in Coventry, had to tell the audience assembled at the first annual dinner of the Coventry Service of Youth Netball League that: "For boys there are football and cricket pitches... but for girls there is nothing apart from a few tennis courts and the facilities provided by industrial concerns".<sup>9</sup> Although there was no factory which owned its own swimming pool, the Standard Motor Company and the Sphinx sports clubs had their private waters for anglers.<sup>10</sup>

The quality of these facilities seemed far better than those provided by local government. Even before the end of the war, the works magazine of the General Electric Company (GEC), *The Loudspeaker*, was able to announce the improvement of their cricket pitch, which was now reportedly looking

like a 'County Ground'.<sup>11</sup> The dance hall had also been improved:

The GEC ballroom, with its sprung floor and attractive lighting, is one of the best in the country; the services of a first-class band are retained, and the modern dances held on Wednesdays and Saturdays are among the most popular in the district. Tuition, by a qualified instructor, is available every Monday, and special dances are run by the various sports sections from time to time.<sup>12</sup>

By 1951, GEC also had a separate billiard room with eight tables, a darts room and a newly opened 'first-class' club. Cultural and educational sides were also not forgotten. At Alfred Herbert, a leading machine tool firm, the works library was opened in December 1948, with eight daily newspapers and five weeklies.<sup>13</sup>

Sports, social and recreational activities of the works' clubs were wide ranging. Throughout the 1940s, Alfred Herbert's Recreation Club sustained about 20 sectional activities: cricket, bowls, table tennis, association football, rugby football, netball, ladies hockey, tennis, badminton, boxing, angling, swimming, skating, golf, darts, a women's league of health and beauty, a male choir, music, a dramatic society, and a photographic society.<sup>14</sup> The destiny of each section seemed to depend chiefly on its secretary's enthusiasm and efforts. Few of them, however, were short lived, and most continued to flourish. At the GEC, 12 different clubs and societies were active at the end of 1945, and some 20 sections were in operation by 1950.<sup>15</sup> The Recreation club of the Standard Motor Company had 34



sports sections in 1952, whilst the figure was just eight in 1946.<sup>16</sup>

Many of these works societies and clubs joined the sectional leagues of the Coventry Works' Sports Association. Mr. G. H. Allen, Chairman of the Association claimed that his committee was responsible for the running 18 or 19 different sections in the summer of 1951, including football, cricket, tennis, bowls, darts, ladies darts, table tennis, netball and angling.<sup>17</sup> In April 1951, the Coventry Works' Darts League accommodated two men's divisions with 32 teams and one ladies' division with 13 teams. In total, 28 local factories and companies sent their teams to the Darts League.<sup>18</sup> The Cricket League had three divisions with 28 first teams of factories, and had three further sections which were constituted by 20 second and third teams.<sup>19</sup> However, it was the remarkable post-war growth of the Netball League which impressed the officials of the Coventry Works Sports Association. In 1945 the Netball League had only two divisions, but in 1951 it was claimed that it had 4 divisions with 34 teams, comprising nearly 350 players.<sup>20</sup> Several sections of each factory often had two or three representative teams which joined the Works' Leagues or other regional leagues, and also competed for various championships, trophies and cups.

Cultural and social clubs also affiliated to various local and national leagues and federations, and competed in various championships. Photographic, artistic and craft societies held exhibitions both in and outside the factory gates. Although they did not belong to the Coventry Works

Sports Association (CWSA), there were a few works drama and music clubs: GEC and Courtaulds both had a dramatic society or orchestral society, while Standard Motors and Coventry Colliery had bands.<sup>21</sup> Almost every club and section had its own annual dinner and prize presentation, dance nights, other various social gatherings, and or outings. There was a further separate inter-works organisation for teenage wage-earners, which might be called an industrial youth service. Immediately after the war, Alfred Herbert set up its own Apprentices Association to affiliate to the Coventry Apprentice Association. The buffet in the Alfred Herbert Recreation Club was opened for them on Friday nights and one billiard table was reserved for them.<sup>22</sup> The inter factory matches of darts, snooker, cricket and football were held between large factories, such as Alfred Herbert, Daimler, Humber-Hillman, Wickmans, Gauge and Tool, and Armstrong Siddeley.<sup>23</sup>

From the industrial welfare point of view, provision of recreational amenities should serve a specific purpose. Through providing superb and rather exclusive amenities, it was expected to relieve employees from a rather colourless and monotonous factory life. Industrialists certainly hoped for various other results, such as good labour relations, high levels of production, and keeping skilled workers. Mr. E. W. Hancock, director and general manager of the Rootes company praised rugby football as an excellent example which embodied 'team spirit' needed in a factory.<sup>24</sup> For recruiting new labour, good recreational amenities were an additional appeal. How did workers react?

Although the facilities were superb, employees' participation in the various works' clubs was limited to a relatively small portion of enthusiasts. Few sections were likely to reach a membership of three figures. For example, at Alfred Herbert, we can find the following: photographic section had 42 members in 1947;<sup>25</sup> angling section had 68 in 1948;<sup>26</sup> badminton section had 20 in 1948, the second year of its formation; in the same year, football section had four teams; newly formed pensioners section had 50 members for the first year;<sup>27</sup> in 1949, the music section had to restrict its activities because of 'small membership', though every Saturday the brass band rehearsal attracted 15 members;<sup>28</sup> and the hockey section was not strong enough to enter any competition in 1949 and 1950.<sup>29</sup>

The most popular club activity seemed to be those with a more social and recreational character rather than those 'serious' ones which needed attention, energy, practice and training. Among them all, dancing was the most popular. The GEC Old Time Dance club, which attracted a full capacity of 350 dancers at its monthly meetings,<sup>30</sup> had more than 1,000 members in 1947.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, social occasions, such as annual dinners, prize presentations, seasonal dancing and day outings, were able to attract their members better than ordinary activities. Even in the daily activities, participation could not be exclusive. Friends and families joined in with a higher subscription fee or a visitors' fee.

Thus, workers' primary interests in various club activities seemed social and for relaxation. Even among those sporting-minded workers, daily training in improving

skills was not so popular. In 1946, *The Alfred Herbert News*, a works magazine, noted that support for the table tennis section 'was very poor on practice nights, especially with the younger players'.<sup>32</sup> Those who worked in the branch factories were less interested in making full use of the facilities.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the collection of subscription fees was often not easy for secretaries.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, this does not mean that works recreationalism was failure. Compare these works club activities with those of many civic voluntary societies and clubs outside the factory gate, and there was no evidence that the achievement of the former was not impressive. Particularly, when we consider the fact that annual and seasonal events, such as field days, sports and gala days, summer holiday camps and children's Christmas parties provided by the large factories, continued to attract big crowds<sup>35</sup>, works recreationalism in Coventry might be seen as relatively successful. And significantly, the events and activities were organised not by the employers but by the independent efforts of the enthusiastic employees themselves.<sup>36</sup>

In Bolton, works recreation played a much smaller part in the local leisure world than in Coventry. Workers' recreational activities tended not to be rooted inside the factory gate, but in the neighbourhood or the wider community. However, there were several cotton mills and other factory firms, which provided recreational facilities for employees. In 1950, when local amateur sports and

welfare clubs were invited to form a committee which would have responsibility for preparing the local recreational events in the Festival of Britain year, seven cotton mills, two machinery works and one leather factory were included.<sup>37</sup> One of the most thriving works clubs in the locality was that of William Walker and Sons Ltd., a large leather manufacturer. In 1947, a local newspaper reported that the company had 1,300 members, nearly 80 per cent of its employees, in its sports organisation, the Walker Institute.<sup>38</sup> It had football, cricket, bowls, billiards, tennis, table tennis, darts and other sports sections, together with a licensed bar.<sup>39</sup>

Another big local firm which offered employees extensive recreational facilities and provisions was the United Thread Mills, which took over a large suburban mill, the Eagley Mills, in 1950. It also had tennis, hockey, rounders, cricket, fishing, and bowls teams.<sup>40</sup> In 1950, the United Thread spent some £12,000 in converting an old hall into a modern accommodation for employees' recreational and social activities. The new hall had a billiards and games room, a lecture room, and a dance hall with room for 180 dancers, which was equipped with full stage, hardware dance floor and a kitchen buffet.<sup>41</sup> The United Thread was also keen to offer its facilities to local voluntary organisations. The company kept a room of the hall aside for the accommodation of the local Girl Guides and the Brownies.

Montague Burton Ltd., a clothing factory which employed some 1,600 workers at the Halliwall Road works in the early 1950s, also emphasised welfare provision for its

employees.<sup>42</sup> There were opticians parlours, a dental surgery, sun-ray rooms, a canteen, rest rooms, nurses, recreation grounds, libraries and a dramatic society.<sup>43</sup> The company also organised beauty contests and dances occasionally.<sup>44</sup> Even in those factories which could not organise wide ranging recreational activities, there were usually a few works sports teams. The Swan Lane Spinning Company, for example, which did not seem to have much interest in industrial welfare other than canteen provision, claimed that it had not only a bowling club and a darts club, but also a discussion group in the immediate post-war year.<sup>45</sup> Probably the most common popular recreation organised by local mills and workshops was seasonal dancing. It was easily organised, and did not cost employees much. These occasions took place in small local dance or the church halls, or even local schools.<sup>46</sup>

There were few sports leagues exclusively constituted by local cotton mills and other works. The only exception was the Mills Bowling League.<sup>47</sup> Works clubs were well represented in the local and regional sports leagues. Many works' cricket teams joined the Bolton and District Cricket Association, one of the two local cricket leagues in Bolton, along with many church teams and independent community teams, though some of the works' teams had much better grounds than other clubs.<sup>48</sup> There was strong participation by women mills' teams, in both hockey and rounders, in the Bolton Sunday School Social League (BSSSL) which was the biggest recreational sports organisation in the area.<sup>49</sup> The table tennis league matches of the BSSSL often took place in

the canteens of local factories. There were also teams from industry in the tennis league of the BSSSL.<sup>50</sup>

There was one example of the apparent failure of exclusive works recreation in the immediate post-war period in Bolton. Barlow and Jones Ltd., a cotton company, donated its large sports ground to the Bolton Corporation in 1950.<sup>51</sup> The ground, Barlow Park, comprised 23 acres and had five tennis courts, three bowling greens, two hockey pitches, two football pitches and a cricket pitch. It also had a pavilion with first class facilities.<sup>52</sup> Sir Thomas D. Barlow said that the park had not been made use of to the full extent by his employees, because of its inconvenient location. However, a local newspaper reported that Sir Thomas also commented that:

... he recognized that his company's employees might prefer to enjoy their leisure and games in some other parts of the town in association with other organisations and, that being so, his only desire now was that the playing fields should be fully used and enjoyed by others.<sup>53</sup>

There was another indication that works' recreation was not so prominent in Bolton. In 1947, Mass-Observation found that there were only five factory based licensed clubs, out of a total 56.<sup>54</sup> Most drinking amenities existed outside the factory gate. As far as works' recreation was concerned, Bolton was different from Coventry.

### Associational leisure activity in the community

In the post-war world, people's leisure activities in terms of associational forms flourished in the Bolton area. Among

them, sporting activities were the most popular, especially those played indoors. The BSSSL organised league competitions in badminton, snooker and billiards, darts, football, rounders, hockey, table tennis and lawn tennis, which altogether involved 126 institutions with no fewer than 260 teams, by the end of 1947.<sup>55</sup> The number of federated institutions increased to 147 in 1949, with approximately 2,000 registered players. The MoE survey estimated that half of them were between 14 and 20 years of age.<sup>56</sup>

At the beginning of 1947, 42 teams were competing in the BSSSL Darts League, which had 58 clubs by the end of the year.<sup>57</sup> The increasing popularity of darts was great enough to bring the formation of a women's section in 1948.<sup>58</sup> It was found that, for the season 1947-48, no fewer than 693 darts players were registered in the league,<sup>59</sup> and in 1949 the total number of darts clubs further increased to 72.<sup>60</sup> There was another local darts league, the Peter Walker Darts League, in Bolton, which had 64 teams in four sections in 1950. Those teams came from some 40 local public houses.<sup>61</sup> Billiards and snooker were also popular. The billiard section of the BSSSL had 26 clubs and the snooker section had 17 clubs in 1947, and no less than 700 players registered in these two sections.<sup>62</sup> In 1949, the billiards section had 24 clubs and the snooker 20.<sup>63</sup> Another local snooker league, the Bolton Snooker League, had 16 clubs with over 300 members.<sup>64</sup> Other sports activities also increased their membership, if not so impressively as the darts league. In 1947, badminton had 16 clubs, hockey 18, table



tennis 46, and in 1949 the memberships of these leagues increased respectively to 18, 24, 54. However, the tennis section remained composed of only six clubs between 1947 and 1949, and the football section slightly declined from 28 to 24 clubs.<sup>65</sup>

Increasing women's participation in recreational sports was probably one of the most remarkable events in post-war Bolton and district. We have already seen the increasing popularity of women's sports such as hockey, badminton and darts. The growth of the BSSSL rounders league was another and perhaps the most remarkable example. When the league resumed its activity in 1947, there were 40 teams with more than 800 players, from 10 to over 40 years of age. Its popularity forced the league committee to decline several new applications for membership.<sup>66</sup> The registered playing membership jumped up to 1,120 in the next season with 64 teams and 1,166 in 1949.<sup>67</sup> The rounders league continued to grow in the early fifties, attracting many clubs from mills, factories and Sunday schools.<sup>68</sup>

Other sports, particularly bowling, swimming, walking and cycling, was also well catered for. In 1949, 11 swimming clubs of the 24 in the Bolton and District Association entered a water-polo competition, and 11 men's and 10 women's teams enjoyed the squadron race.<sup>69</sup> The Bolton branch of the Youth Hostel Association had over 3,000 members, who enjoyed both holiday and weekend walks.<sup>70</sup> Both the Co-operative Holidays Association and the Holiday Fellowship also grew in popularity, with 200 members each.<sup>71</sup> There were also an old established Clarion Cycling Club, and

the Cyclists' Touring Club, which organised a cycling tour every Sunday, as well as various church based cycling clubs.<sup>72</sup>

Bolton had a long tradition in bowling and it was claimed that there were many clubs from both workshops and parks as well as numerous private players.<sup>73</sup> There were at least four bowling leagues: the Bolton Parks Amateur Bowling League, the Bolton Workshops and Social Clubs Bowling League, the Bolton Municipal Bowling League, and the Carpet Bowling League.<sup>74</sup> In 1947, the Carpet Bowling League resumed its post-war activity with 8 clubs, and in 1948, 13 clubs with 1,000 parks bowlers entered the competition of the Bolton Parks Bowling Association.<sup>75</sup>

Local cricket and football clubs, whose main purpose was recreation and not money or victory per se, were certainly numerous.<sup>76</sup> As I have already noted in the previous chapter, there were some 60 local football clubs in 1948. Some 40 cricket clubs played in the Bolton and District Cricket Association between 1946 and 1951.<sup>77</sup> In 1951, the 63rd season, there were 34 clubs with 66 teams in the six divisions.<sup>78</sup> Although the 11 clubs of senior level hired professional assistance, the majority of players, either of works, churches or independent clubs, played only for pleasure.<sup>79</sup>

There were more than 20 amateur dramatic groups, some 15 musical organisations, a film society, an art circle, a writers circle, a camera club and other local groups of national organisations such as the Incorporated Radio Society and the Society for Model Engineers.<sup>80</sup> Among them,

the film society organised by young Labour Party activists was quite popular, with more than 600 members aged between 14 and 20, before the Sunday opening of cinemas was allowed in the locality. The society presented the film club as 'rational recreation' for young people on Sunday evenings.<sup>81</sup> There was a strong presence of local brass bands. In 1950, eight brass bands from the Bolton area competed in the record entry of 37 in the North Western Area Brass Band Championship.<sup>82</sup> However, these cultural and artistic activities in general were certainly less popular among workers than sports. In a discussion about the possibility of establishing a local Arts Council in Bolton, a women representative of Montague Burton's Entertainment Committee said that 'the majority of workers were not interested in the arts'.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the cultural groups had less opportunity to do something together in promoting local cultural life in general, than the recreational sports could do. A local newspaper criticised the selfish attitudes of these cultural organisations revealed in a meeting which discussed the possibility of a local Arts Council:

Representatives seemed to be there with watching briefs for their organisations, their concern being whether a local association of the arts could confer any pecuniary or other material advantages on their particular societies or whether, on the other hand, it would be likely to interfere with them. There was not the faintest evidence of any general realization that the arts are related and that they stimulate each other by contact, the idea that a league of the arts could devote itself to other than organisational matters seemed remote from the majority of minds. Interests were quite obviously sectional.<sup>84</sup>

Social and recreational leisure in associational forms seemed to sustain their place in the locality throughout the post-war 1940s. The number of social and recreational clubs which had intoxicating liquor trade licences increased from 32 in 1946 to 35 in 1951, as Table I in the Appendix shows. There were a further 29 local political clubs, which had the same licence, between 1946 and 1951 in Bolton. However, the most flourishing social club during the period was the 'Over 60s club'. In 1947 it was claimed that there were of 13 these clubs with 1,750 members in Bolton.<sup>85</sup> In 1949, the number increased to 17 with a membership of more than 3,000 and most clubs had a waiting list.<sup>86</sup>

It seemed certain that the social aspects were the most important element whatever leisure activities people enjoyed. There was a revealing debate on local dancing habits in a Bolton newspaper in 1949. A serious dancer resented the local patrons attending public dances, because many of them seemed 'quite unable to dance'.<sup>87</sup> A dance goer who explained that he went to dance not for the 'correct steps' but for 'a good time' responded:

I agree with his estimate that 80 per cent make no attempt to effect a "heel close" or any other technically correct step, the remaining 20 per cent are easy to pick out. They are the ones who are not smiling. ...<sup>88</sup>

As the column editor of the above correspondence noted, without 'a spontaneous expression of the joy of living', any leisure activities could not last.<sup>89</sup> A Mass Observation survey also found that the most popular reason why they went to the pub in Bolton was 'company and relaxation'.<sup>90</sup>

In Coventry, in addition to the activity of the local works' clubs, there was a good deal of activity in various sports, cultural and social clubs and associations. In sport, probably amateur association football was best organised. In season 1946-47, the Coventry and District Football League accommodated 40 teams in three divisions.<sup>91</sup> In season 1948-49, a record entry of 68 in four divisions was achieved,<sup>92</sup> although this proved to be exceptional season. Because of the popularity of the league, shortage of grounds, referees and equipment persisted. There were always a few clubs which failed. Thus, it was difficult to complete the fixtures, especially in the case of the lower divisions. The management committee minutes revealed that there were several incidents every year: the misconduct of players or referees, the fielding of ineligible players, the failure to fulfil the fixture without notice in advance, and the poaching of players.<sup>93</sup> However, the great majority of the games were run satisfactorily. There was only one case in the first five seasons of the post-war period that a game was abandoned: the particular game was called off, because of 'disorderly conduct of players and spectators'.<sup>94</sup>

The angling association in Coventry was very popular and active. In 1946, only the Foleshill and District Angling Association had at least 100 members.<sup>95</sup> In the autumn 1946, the Coventry and District Angling Association organised the first post-war annual contest in which more than 800 entries were recorded from all over the country.<sup>96</sup> Many local angling clubs met in the local pub, and one of the oldest

had a history of hundred and fifty years.<sup>97</sup> The Coventry Association organised the four annual contests, the inter-city matches, and the local contests for boys and girls.<sup>98</sup> The angling skill of the Coventry Association seemed high. Towards the end of the 1940s, the association started to take various prizes and in the 1951 national contest, the representative team of the Coventry Association finished fourth.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the association, working men's clubs organised their own angling league and it was big and experienced enough to repeatedly organise the national angling contest of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, with an entry of more than one thousand.<sup>100</sup>

Although it was a very minority sport compared with football or angling, more than 10 local cycling clubs organised tours every weekend during the season.<sup>101</sup> In 1948, the Coventry section of the Cyclists' Touring Club had 50 to 60 active members who were mostly young.<sup>102</sup> Already in 1946, the Coventry section was big enough to establish a separate family section, which organised its own activities, using side-cars and trailers.<sup>103</sup> Indoor sports and games were popular, too. Coventry Table Tennis League was running 7 divisions in 1951.<sup>104</sup> In 1951, the Coventry Bridge League had four divisions with 28 teams.<sup>105</sup> Over 200 players in about 20 clubs, the majority of which were works' clubs, competed in the Coventry Chess League.<sup>106</sup> Surprisingly, the Chapelfields Domino League, which had started in 1944 with only 60 members, now had about 2,000 members in 1951.<sup>107</sup>

Cultural activity was less popular, as in Bolton. In 1951, there were at least six amateur dramatic societies,

eight choirs, four operatic societies, nine orchestral and choral societies, and eight bands in Coventry, including works' organisations.<sup>108</sup> The membership of these amateur cultural and music groups was generally between 20 and 50. In 1945, the City of Coventry Band was active with 30 members, often being broadcast on the BBC.<sup>109</sup> Although it had considerable financial difficulties, the Coventry Philharmonic Orchestra had 88 members in 1951.<sup>110</sup> Sustaining amateur dramatics was also not easy without financial support. In 1948 33 drama groups, a record entry, competed in the Coventry annual amateur drama festival and in 1951 20 teams entered the festival.<sup>111</sup>

The popularity of the social clubs in Coventry was briefly described in Chapter 4 in comparison with those of both the community centres and the public houses. The local working men's club movement expanded in the post-war period. The Warwickshire branch, to which the clubs in Coventry belonged, increased the total number of affiliated clubs from 77 in 1941 to 92 in 1951.<sup>112</sup> One of the biggest was the Radford social club with a luxurious lounge and games facilities such as eight billiard tables, which had 1,600 members. It claimed that the bar takings alone totalled £57,435 for 1950.<sup>113</sup> On Houghton housing estate in the outskirts of Coventry, soon after its establishment by the residents themselves, the social club became 'a lively centre of neighbouring'.<sup>114</sup> The club was trying to serve as a focal point for a family. Sociologists observed the merits of the club:

Some of the early members introduced neighbours to the club, and members occasionally go together or meet there. Membership is open only to men, but they are encouraged to bring their wives and children. This was one of the objectives of the club, to provide an opportunity for families to go out together, and to stop quarrelling as to who was to stay at home. And, in consequence, over week-ends the club has something of the atmosphere of a family centre.

Overall, the club going habit among Coventry people seemed fairly important. In three sample areas in Stoke, more than a half of the adults attended a club of one kind or another.<sup>115</sup> Although women also went to clubs, the extent of their attendance was much less in Coventry.<sup>116</sup>

### Home based and the informal leisure

The importance of home and family in shaping the people's leisure experience during the post-war forties were fairly clear from the reply of many workers to the GEC's *Loudspeaker*. The GEC works' magazine, had a regular column which featured the spare time interests of workers and staff who had served long years. Thus, the workers interviewed were not representative of the whole workforce at the GEC. The columnist conducted a loose interview, simply asking what the interviewee's interests were in their spare time. Therefore, the definition of leisure interest was arbitrary, subject to each respondent. Despite these limitations, the workers' reply gave us an overall picture of what kind of activities were popular among them.

Among the one hundred male workers, mostly skilled, interviewed between 1945 and 1951, gardening was by far the most popular spare time activity: more than 30 per cent of



the interviewees said so. After gardening were watching or playing sports, especially association football, and pub games such as billiards, snooker and darts. Home decorating was less popular in the period. There was indirect evidence that gardening was less popular in Bolton than in Coventry. A local newspaper in Bolton reported that the public did not want a large garden.<sup>117</sup> The Bolton Housing Committee tried to organise a Council estates' garden competition in the late 1940s, but failed to get enough support.<sup>118</sup>

Among female workers at the GEC in Coventry, the most popular hobby was knitting and sewing, supported by no less than a third of the interviewed workers, though dancing had a similar proportion of their support. Then, reading and gardening were the next popular activities. A combination of knitting and reading was popular choices, though the former was sometimes made difficult because of the scarcity of wool at the time.<sup>119</sup> Except for young sports-minded women workers, female spare time activities tended to be more confined to around the home. That was probably one of the reasons why most of the popular hobbies among the women were home based.

Gardening, knitting and sewing were the hobbies at home, and all of them had a strong practical aspect. Some of them were quite conscious about this point. A male worker at the GEC claimed that he did 'a spot of gardening but only to guarantee good supplies'.<sup>120</sup> A male worker, an engineer, claimed that his hobbies were 'gardening, woodwork and upholstery', which had to 'solve a lot of household and furnishing problems in times like that'.<sup>121</sup> Another cabinet

shop worker, whose hobby was woodwork, claimed even in 1950 that he was 'still replacing some of the pieces he [had] lost from his home in the blitz'.<sup>122</sup> Many aspects of these spare time activities at home were difficult to separate from those of domestic obligation. And more spare time for women than for men tended to be taken up by family obligation or domestic duty. In Bolton, the main reason why women were absent from the pubs during midday on Sundays was believed to be that they were preparing Sunday dinner.<sup>123</sup> A woman worker at GEC claimed that she had 'never had time for hobbies' but she had 'just become a proud grannie'.<sup>124</sup> Another middle-aged single female worker claimed that her spare time was 'fully occupied with her domestic affairs'.<sup>125</sup> A chargehand women worker in the cabinet shop who had completed 21 years service, said that her main hobby was 'home life, with a special emphasis on decorating' in which she took a pride in getting a professional finish.<sup>126</sup> These comments were far more common among female workers than male workers.

In terms of neighbouring or socialising, home was again more important to women than men. In Braydon Road neighbourhood unit, Coventry, where the semi-detached prefabricated houses dominated and the great majority of male residents were skilled workers employed in manufacturing, men's sociability was more restricted than women's.<sup>127</sup> However, for both men or women, socialising and neighbouring in the area were fairly restricted. Gossiping, borrowing and lending, and pop in and pop out, all were more or less regarded by the residents as potential hazards of

the relationship between neighbours, and more importantly, threats to privacy.<sup>128</sup> Although the Braydon Road area was designed to facilitate the maximum possible contact among them,<sup>129</sup> even those residents of sociable type tended to refrain from familiarity with the neighbours. Among male residents, contacts with neighbours were restricted to the street, back gardens and doorsteps.<sup>130</sup> In a way, the newly established social club, which has been mentioned already in the previous section of this chapter, played a more positive role in facilitating socialisation among the neighbours than the immediate neighbourhood. Concern and anger about a lack of privacy were even more strongly expressed by other residents, who were working class and were living in the older terrace houses on the municipal estates: the outside lavatory and the narrow back gardens without high hedges were particularly resented.<sup>131</sup>

In addition to gender difference, the age, life stage, or familial situation, too, played an important role in determining spare time habits. Many workers who appeared in *The Loudspeaker*, either men or women, said that when they got older, their leisure habits became more quiet and safe. So a 'keen player of the rugger club', now became engaged in the 'less energetic games of snooker and darts'.<sup>132</sup> A middle aged woman, who was 'once very keen on athletics', a 'keen member of the League of Health and Beauty' and a 'very keen member of the Lady Songsters' began enjoying gardening and walking.<sup>133</sup> A man who had been involved in playing rugger, swimming, cycling and sculling was now a spectator of these events, having become equally interested in walking

and in playing bowls.<sup>134</sup> Some cyclists and motor cyclists changed their interest to four wheels, although this was as much a question of money as of age. When workers married, and especially had children, their leisure habits tended to be constrained in terms of time, place and money, particularly in the case of women who had a primary responsible for child rearing.<sup>135</sup>

There were a few spare time activities at home and around the family which were not yet popular in the post-war forties: home drinking was not the majority experience at least in Bolton. A Mass-Observation survey revealed that 60 per cent of their respondents replied that they did not have alcoholic drinks at home. Only 20 per cent and 8 per cent answered 'yes' and 'sometimes' respectively, while the remaining 12 per cent said that they would drink at home only on a 'special' occasion.<sup>136</sup> Television ownership was very limited, too. The television ownership among the sample households in three areas in Stoke, Coventry, was less than 10 per cent at the end of the 1940s,<sup>137</sup> although the spread of ownership undoubtedly accelerated after a transmitting station at Birmingham opened in December 1949. In Bolton, too, 500 television sets were installed within five months after the Birmingham transmitter began to operate.<sup>138</sup> Motor car ownership was also restricted to a minority, especially in Bolton. In Bolton, there were less than 3,981 motor cars in use in 1946 and 5,086 in 1951. In Coventry, the corresponding figures were 12,241 and 16,744.<sup>139</sup> These figures mean that in 1951, more than one-fifth of private

households in Coventry had a car, while less than one-tenth of Bolton households owned a car.<sup>140</sup>

### Events, trips and holidays

Seasonal regular events were popular in post-war Bolton. The annual New Year fair was popular and old established. The New Year's Dog Show organised by the Bolton Canine Society attracted 4,500 spectators in 1950.<sup>141</sup> Another traditional new year's day show, of game fowl, died hard. In 1948, the show was still organised but with only 12 entries, a new low record.<sup>142</sup> At Easter, many local people went picnicking and hiking on the nearby moors or visited the seaside.<sup>143</sup> In March 1947, Bolton's 'Grand National' was revived. A local newspaper reported: 'Going to the Grand, listening to the band, watching the dancers, laughing with the comics and sidling now and then into the bar -- it is all very much a part of the Bolton routine'.<sup>144</sup>

People's demands for an annual summer holiday had been very strong since wartime. In June 1944, the Bolton Mayor asked for a reasonable train service to the seaside for workers' summer holidays, which provoked criticism from a London newspaper that Boltonians behaved as if there was no war.<sup>145</sup> There was also a lot of anxiety about the 1945 General Election. A local newspaper anticipated that 'of the 120,354 electors on the new register probably not less than 75 per cent will be taking holiday that week ... It is not to be expected that they will be willing to interrupt, or cut short, their holidays in order to return to Bolton to vote'.<sup>146</sup> The local Trades Council protested about the date

of the General Election being in Bolton holiday week.<sup>147</sup> However, the actual voting rate among the electors was 78.33 per cent which, in fact, was not worse but slightly better than 76.68 per cent in 1935.<sup>148</sup>

In the summer of 1946, the biggest holiday exodus since 1939 was observed by a local newspaper. Six special trains to Blackpool were fully booked and day coach excursions for the week were sold out. Blackpool remained the most popular summer holiday resort among mill workers throughout the 1940s. In 1949 a newspaper reporter wrote of a very strong presence of mill workers, while other Boltonians tended to go elsewhere.<sup>149</sup> Heavy booking for camping holidays in Skegness and Prestatyn was claimed by the local agent of Thomas Cook.<sup>150</sup> In 1948, many summer holiday arrangements were extended from a week to a fortnight.<sup>151</sup> In 1949, some £700,000 was withdrawn from the Bolton Saving Bank for local summer holidays, against £250,000 in 1945.<sup>152</sup> There were more than 600 saving clubs at local mills, works, offices and streets.<sup>153</sup> Large scale holiday camps were also popular. In 1949, 2,000 Boltonians went to Middleton Tower holiday camp, near Morecambe, another 2,000 to Butlin's holiday camp at Pwllheli, North Wales, and 1,300 went to other camps.<sup>154</sup> Even on holiday, familiarity, locality and routine were important elements in people's leisure life. They would buy the *Bolton Evening News* in the streets of Blackpool and other resorts, or at the popular holiday camp cites.<sup>155</sup> Although it was often said that money was 'tight' and 'scarce' in the post-war 1940s, there is ample evidence

that Boltonians at least would spend money for a day trip or an evening show when on holiday.<sup>156</sup>

In Coventry, the holiday trend was very similar. After the war, local entrepreneurs in the tourist industry gradually revived, although in 1946 and 1947 the business was not easy. Both the local motor coach and railway companies experienced many difficulties in meeting the extra holiday demands. Local travel bureaus were hard pressed to arrange booking for travelling and accommodation.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, in 1946 it was essential for holiday makers to take ration cards.<sup>158</sup> Therefore, despite the extra coach and railway services, the stay at home holiday, probably with a day trip to nearby places, was common among local working-class families.<sup>159</sup>

From the late 1940s, however, contrary to the experiences of cinema, theatre and drinking businesses, the local tourist industry enjoyed their success year after year. Extra trains for summer holidays increased from 15 in 1946 and 1947 to 36 in 1950.<sup>160</sup> Demands for holidays abroad also grew, though it could not recover its pre-war status, because of the currency restrictions and the fall in consumer spending power especially around 1950.<sup>161</sup> Abroad was not yet a destination for a working-class family. Most holiday makers who left the country were ex-servicemen, single people or childless married couples.<sup>162</sup> The most striking holiday event was, however, that set up by a big local factory. In 1951, Standard Motors provided a 12 days holiday camp at Weston-Super-Mare with 500 tents for their 2,000 employees and their families. This was an all

inclusive holiday camp and on Friday August 10th, 45 coaches and 48 private cars left their factory gate.<sup>163</sup>

Popularity of day trips, either of long distance or to neighbouring spots, certainly did not decline. In 1948, a municipally sponsored 'know your city bus tour' was very popular in filling more than 20 buses on one journey.<sup>164</sup> In later 1940s, travel by car was added to the list of local ways of holiday taking.<sup>165</sup> At the same time, there were many stay-at-home holiday makers who spent their holidays gardening and home decorating throughout these years, and local newspapers reported 'big trade' or 'brisk business' among iron mongers, seed merchants, and hardware retailers, during holiday weeks.<sup>166</sup> Not against but along with these trends, local tourist businesses made a steady progress. Those people, who would save their expenditure on drinking, cinema and theatre, would spend for a holiday. A local road transport official said that 'the increasing cost of living had not deterred people from the desire "to get away from it all" for a few days'.<sup>167</sup>



## Notes to Chapter 7

- 1 See, a study on the subject in the inter-war period, J. Crump, 'Recreation in Coventry Between the Wars', in B. Lancaster and T. Mason (ed.), *Life and Labour in a 20th Century City. The Experience of Coventry* (1986), especially pp. 268-80.
- 2 After the November blitz in 1940, there were still 60 industrial canteens, whose number was greater than that of other restaurants in the city, numbering 56. See, Appendix I to 'Deputation to the Divisional Food Officer', 3 February 1941, in Town Clerk's Department, Civil Defence Section: Papers relating to Food Control, 1939-45.
- 3 In early 1950s, there were 46 licensed clubs which belonged to industrial concerns. This constituted more than a third of total licensed clubs in the City. See, Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), p. 112.
- 4 J. Crump, 'Recreation in Coventry', (1986), p. 276.
- 5 The regular dances were opened to the public with some admission fee. See, J. Crump, 'Recreation in Coventry', (1986), pp. 275-78.
- 6 See, CRO, Acc 240, Coventry Sports and Social Association, 'Wartime Social Survey', 1943.
- 7 CS, 18 May 1946.
- 8 CS, 15 November 1947.
- 9 CS, 22 May 1953.
- 10 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 4, no. 5 (October 1949), p. 9.
- 11 *Loudspeaker*, (May-June 1945), p. 16.
- 12 *Loudspeaker*, new series, vol. 4, no. 10 (December 1950/January 1951), p. 197.
- 13 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 22, no. 5 (November- December 1948), p. 102.
- 14 Activities of these sections can be found in the various issues of *Alfred Herbert News*, 1946-1951.
- 15 These accounts can be found in the various volumes of *Loudspeaker*, 1945-1951.
- 16 MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/PER/WE/1, a draft on industrial welfare, written by P. Clyedon, the Canteen, Social and Welfare manager, [November 1952].
- 17 CET, 14 July 1951.
- 18 CET, 11 April 1951.
- 19 CET, 3 March 1951.
- 20 CET, 14 July 1951.
- 21 CRO, CP, a list of local entertainments organisations, compiled by the General Purpose Sub-Committee, 2 February 1951. For example, the Jaguar Works Band and GEC Dramatic Society were not included in the list.
- 22 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 19, no. 6 (Nov-Dec 1945), p. 118.
- 23 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 20, no. 5 (Sept-Oct 1946), p. 91.
- 24 CET, 5 May 1951.
- 25 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 21, no. 5 (September-October, 1947), p. 91.

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- 26 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 22, no. 4 (July-October, 1948), p. 8.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 86.
- 28 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 23, no. 1 (January-February, 1949), p. 14.
- 29 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 24, no. 4 (July-August, 1950), p. 96.
- 30 *Loudspeaker* (April-May, 1946), p. 6.
- 31 *Loudspeaker*, new series, vol. 1, no. 2 (August 1947).
- 32 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 20, no. 3 (May-June 1946), p. 47.
- 33 *Loudspeaker*, new series, vol. 4, no. 10 (December 1950/January 1951), p. 196.
- 34 In the case of GEC, all the employees were automatically members of its Sports and Social Club with the subscription at one penny a week. Enthusiasts who would like to belong to sectional activities either cultural or sporting had to pay additional annual cost of 3 shillings and 6 pence to 7 shillings and 6 pence in 1950. See, *Loudspeaker*, new series, vol. 4, no. 10 (December 1950/January 1951), p. 197.
- 35 Dunlop's third annual field day and sports for employees' children was attended by more than 4,000 people (*CS*, 11 August 1945); Some 3,000 people including 1,800 children gathered at the Coventry Standard Motors Sports Ground on the day of a children's fete and garden party (*CS*, 15 September 1945); Humber-Hilman's employees' children numbering some 600 competed at its children's sports day (*CS*, 1 September 1945). Morris Motors Recreation Society successfully organised its field day with approximately 5,000 in the crowd (*CS*, 25 August 1945 and 24 August 1946); Alfred Herbert also organised its second annual field day with some 4,000 employees and their family and friends (*CS*, 18 August 1945) and 6,000 spectators in 1948 (*CS*, 14 August 1948). Daimler also attracted a 'big crowd' at the works' sports day (*CS*, 2 July 1949) and its gala day in 1950 was referred as the 'biggest one day outdoor event in the Midlands' (*CS*, 28 July 1950). At the Christmas Party organised by the GEC, some 2,000 children of employees attended every year (*Loudspeaker*, new series, vol. 4, no. 10 (December 1950/January 1951), p. 198.).
- 36 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 22, no. 3 (May-July 1948), p. 58.
- 37 BCLA, ABCF/1/6, a list of amateur sports and welfare organisations, n.d.[1950]. They are: Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers Association Ltd.; Knowles Ltd., cotton spinners; Richard Harwood and Son Ltd., spinners; Greenhalgh and Shaws Ltd., spinners; Tootal Broadhurst Lee Co. Ltd.; United Thread Mills Ltd., spinners; Bee Hive Spinning Company Ltd.; De Havilland Propellers Ltd.; Dobson and Barlow Ltd., textile machinist; and William Walker and Sons Ltd., leather manufacturer.
- 38 *BJG*, 3 April 1947. In the very early 1950s, the total number of employees in the Walker business was some

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- 1,700. See, C. H. Saxelby (ed), *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 97.
- 39 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Drinking Habits, Box 12, File E, 'Licensing Statistics, Bolton [1947].
- 40 *BJG*, 2 January 1948; 5 June and 30 September 1949.
- 41 *BJG*, 27 January 1950.
- 42 A brief description of the company in the post-war period can be found in Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 99.
- 43 *Liverpool Daily Post*, 13 December 1945; *BJG*, 10 March 1950.
- 44 *BJG*, 28 April and 6 October 1950.
- 45 *Liverpool Daily Post*, 12 December 1945.
- 46 The Belmont Bleaching and Dyeing works held their social dances and whist drives at a local school. *BJG*, 15 November 1946 and 2 January 1948.
- 47 *BJG*, 20 May 1949; *Green Final*, 30 May and 6 June, 1953.
- 48 R. Cavanagh, *Cotton Town Cricket: The Centenary Story of Lancashire's Oldest Cricket League* (1988), pp. 41-44.
- 49 R. Marks (ed.), *Bolton Sports Federation: Centenary Booklet 1890-1990* (1990), pp. 10-16.
- 50 *Ibid.*, pp. 17-22.
- 51 Cavanagh, *Cotton Town Cricket* (1988), p. 43. The wage of the groundsman used to be paid by the employees themselves.
- 52 *BEN*, 1 March 1950.
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Drinking Habits, Box 12, File E, 'memo on the licensed clubs in Bolton', [1947].
- 55 *BJG*, 19 December 1947.
- 56 BCLA, ABCF/4/5, MoE, 'General Area Survey of Youth Service' (1948), p. 13. The survey claimed that there were some 3,000 playing members registered in the BSSSL, but this figure seemed exaggerated. An organising secretary of the league reported that numbers of registered members were 1,200 in 1947. See, *BJG*, 19 December 1947.
- 57 In 1941, it had only 10 clubs. *BJG*, 17 January 1947.
- 58 *BJG*, 19 December 1947.
- 59 *BJG*, 4 June 1948.
- 60 *BJG*, 19 December 1947.
- 61 *BJG*, 16 June 1950.
- 62 *BJG*, 21 February 1947.
- 63 *BJG*, 14 January 1949.
- 64 *BJG*, 18 April 1947.
- 65 *BJG*, 19 December 1947 and 14 January 1949.
- 66 *BJG*, 6 June and 19 September 1947.
- 67 *BJG*, 9 July 1948 and 30 September 1949.
- 68 Marks, *Bolton Sports Federation* (1990), p 14; Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 108.
- 69 *BJG*, 1 April 1949.
- 70 *BJG*, 7 January 1949.
- 71 BCLA, ABCF/4/5, MoE, 'General Area Survey' (1948), p. 13.

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- 72 BCLA, ABCF/1/6, 'A list of proposed sports programme for Festival of Britain', 11 December 1950; *BJG*, 12 May 1950.
  - 73 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 108.
  - 74 BCLA, ABCF/1/6, 'A list of proposed sports programme for Festival of Britain', 11 December 1950.
  - 75 *BJG*, 17 October 1947 and 30 April 1948.
  - 76 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 108.
  - 77 The figure is based on the Appendix II, in Cavanagh, *Cotton Town Cricket* (1988).
  - 78 *BJG*, 20 April 1951.
  - 79 Ibid. On detail accounts of the pre-war recreational cricket in Bolton area, see, J. Williams, 'Recreational Cricket in the Bolton Area between the Wars', in R. Holt (ed.), *Sport and the Working Class in Modern Britain* (Manchester, 1990).
  - 80 BCLA, ABCF/1/5, list of cultural organisations, not dated [1950]; *BJG*, 23 July 1948 and 9 June 1950.
  - 81 *BJG*, 7 December 1945.
  - 82 *BJG*, 10 March 1950.
  - 83 *BEN*, 5 December 1950.
  - 84 *BEN*, 15 December 1950.
  - 85 *BJG*, 27 June 1947.
  - 86 *BJG*, 14 April 1949.
  - 87 *BJG*, 18 February 1949.
  - 88 Ibid.
  - 89 Ibid.
  - 90 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Leisure, Box 2, File G.
  - 91 Coventry and District Football League, *Official Handbook for 1946-47*, which can be found in CRO, Acc 1096.
  - 92 Coventry and District Football League, *Official Handbook for 1948-49*.
  - 93 CRO, Acc 617, Coventry and District Football League, Management Committee minutes, various dates between 1948 and 1951.
  - 94 CRO, Acc 617, Coventry and District Football League, Management Committee minutes, 21 December 1948.
  - 95 *CS*, 12 October 1946. See also *CS*, 28 April 1945. The 40th annual meeting of the National Federation of Anglers, which claimed to have about 70,000 members, was held in Coventry. Among various regions in Wales and England, the Midlands, Yorkshire, Lancashire and London were claimed as strongholds.
  - 96 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 1, no. 6 (November 1946), p. 16.
  - 97 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 3, no. 11 (April 1949), p. 7.
  - 98 Ibid., pp. 7 and 19; vol. 4, no. 3 (August 1949), p. 9; vol. 5, no. 11 (April 1951), p. 15.
  - 99 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 4, no. 5 (October 1949), pp. 9 and 10; vol. 6, no. 2 (July 1951), p. 11.
  - 100 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 4, no. 8 (January 1950), p. 9; vol. 6, no. 3 (August 1951), p. 11.
  - 101 *CET*, 18 April 1951.
  - 102 CRO, Sec/CF/1/15113, letter from the Coventry section secretary of the Cyclists' Touring Club (Coventry and

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- East Warwickshire District Association, to the Coventry Town Clerk, 1 April 1948.
- 103 *C.T.C. Gazette*, vol. 68, no. 1 (January 1949), p. 11; vol. 69, no. 2 (February 1950), p. 46.
- 104 *CET*, 17 April 1951.
- 105 *CET*, 6 April 1951.
- 106 *CET*, 31 May 1951; CRO, Sec/CF/1/15113, letter from E. R. Shaw, secretary of the Coventry Chess League to the Coventry Town Clerk, 14 March 1948; *Coventry Chess League Handbook 1947-48* (1947).
- 107 *CET*, 28 April 1951.
- 108 CRO, CP, a list of local entertainments organisations, compiled by the General Purpose Sub-Committee, 2 February 1951. For example, the Jaguar Works Band and GEC Dramatic Society were not included in the list.
- 109 *CS*, 23 June 1945.
- 110 *CET*, 10 August 1951.
- 111 K. Richardson, *Twentieth-Century Coventry* (1972), p. 315; *CET*, 27 April 1951.
- 112 *The Club and Institute Journal* (July 1951), p. 8.
- 113 *CET*, 20 April 1951.
- 114 L. Kuper, 'Blueprint Living for Together', in L. Kuper (ed.), *Living in Towns* (1953), p. 122.
- 115 J. Hayes, 'Convenience and Selectivity and the Planning of Neighbourhood Unit', in 'Coventry Sociological Survey' (unpublished report, 1953), pp. 32-35, and 67.
- 116 *Ibid.*, p. 33; L. Kuper, 'Blueprint' (1953), p. 126.
- 117 *BJG*, 15 December 1950.
- 118 *BJG*, 2 April 1948.
- 119 *CS*, 13 January 1948.
- 120 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 4, no. 2 (March 1950), p. 38.
- 121 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 2, no. 9 (November 1948), p. 186.
- 122 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 4, no. 7 (September 1950), p. 142.
- 123 *Mass-Observation, Meet Yourself on Sunday* (1949), p. 31.
- 124 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 3, no. 8 (November 1949), p. 164.
- 125 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 4, no. 9 (November 1950), p. 184.
- 126 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 2, no. 5 (June 1948), p. 107.
- 127 Kuper, 'Blueprint' (1953), pp. 47, 58-62.
- 128 *Ibid.*, pp. 42-66.
- 129 For example, back gardens were grouped together and looked like 'a communal area of living': *ibid.*, p. 114.
- 130 *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- 131 M. Bennathan, 'Terrace Houses. A Study of Housing Satisfaction', in 'Sociological Survey' (unpublished report, 1953), especially pp. 61-76. See also a city planning officer's report, W. Burns, 'The Coventry Sociological Survey: Results and Interpretation', *Town Planning Review*, vol. 25, no. 2 (July 1954), pp. 128-48.
- 132 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 2, no. 9 (November 1948), p. 186.
- 133 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 4, no. 10 (December-January, 1950-51), p. 208.
- 134 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 4, no. 7 (September 1950), p. 142.
- 135 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 3, no. 8 (November 1949), p. 150.
- Mrs. V. Lester Brown, President of the Coventry branch

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- of the National Council of Women, agreed with this view. See, CS, 2 July 1949.
- 136 Mass-Observation Archive, Topic Collection, Leisure, Box 2, File G.
- 137 Hayes, 'Convenience and Selectivity', p. 20.
- 138 BJG, 19 May 1950.
- 139 The figures were the number of vehicle licences which were current during the quarter ended 30th September 1946 and 1951. They can be found in Ministry of Transport, *Mechanically-Propelled Road Vehicles, Great Britain. Return no. 136A (1947), Table 1; Return no. 156 (1952), Table 10.*
- 140 The numbers of private households in 1951 were 54,920 in Bolton and 76,499 in Coventry. General Register Office, *Census 1951. England and Wales. County Report: Lancashire (1954), Table 3; Census 1951. England and Wales. County Report: Warwickshire (1954), Table 3.*
- 141 BJG, 6 January 1950.
- 142 BJG, 9 January 1948.
- 143 BJG, 11 April 1947.
- 144 BJG, 14 March 1947.
- 145 BJG, 30 June 1944.
- 146 BJG, 25 May 1945.
- 147 Ibid.
- 148 BJG, 27 July 1945.
- 149 BJG, 8 July 1949.
- 150 BJG, 28 June 1946.
- 151 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey (1953)*, p. 109.
- 152 BJG, 29 June 1945 and 2 June 1950.
- 153 BJG, 10 June 1949.
- 154 BJG, 1 July 1949.
- 155 BJG, 24 June 1949.
- 156 BJG, 1 July and 9 September 1949, and 6 April and 2 June 1950.
- 157 CS, 1 June 1946 and 19 July 1947.
- 158 CS, 20 July 1947.
- 159 See, CS, 27 July 1946; 26 July 1947; 2 August 1947.
- 160 CS, 19 July 1947 and 28 July 1950.
- 161 CS, 22 May 1947; 19 February 1949; 18 August 1950.
- 162 CS, 18 June and 23 July 1949. In pre-war years, it was claimed there was about 5,000 local residents going Switzerland. See, CS, 1 June 1946.
- 163 CET, 26 July 1951.
- 164 CS, 28 August 1948.
- 165 CS, 23 July 1949.
- 166 CS, 20 April 1946 and 23 July 1949.
- 167 CS, 23 July 1949.

## CHAPTER 8: Municipal and Commercial Provision in Leisure, Coventry, 1950s

While there were not many changes in the first half of the 1950s, towards the end of the decade the landscape of local leisure worlds visibly changed. Municipal leisure services expanded steadily. Several new forms of entertainment gained popularity and began to undermine the more traditional businesses. The Labour majority on the City Council was eager to provide modern entertainment facilities and social amenities, as many as possible in the city centre, either municipal or commercial. However, it was only after the main shopping facilities began to be completed that these wishes began to materialise. There followed the opening of the Belgrade Theatre in 1958, a circular shaped cafe in the central shopping area in 1959, and a massive ultra-modern dance hall, the Locarno ballroom, in 1960. All these premises were leased from the City Council, who expected that their initiatives would bring more life into the city centre. This chapter follows up subjects first introduced in Chapter 5. It will describe municipal and commercial leisure provision and public reaction to them in the 1950s.

### 1. Municipal Provision

#### Open spaces and games facilities

As I have described in Chapter 5, municipal games' facilities in Coventry were quite inadequate in meeting local people's demands throughout the 1940s. Every sports ground and facility was 'rationed' during the period, in the

same as food and clothes. In the 1950s, the Parks Department at first planned to add a good number of open spaces and sports pitches in the locality. However, because low priority was given to these schemes both nationally and locally, a substantial improvement in these facilities was never possible. For example, a development plan to convert a 180 acre farm into a park, which had been proposed in the early 1950s,<sup>1</sup> was quietly dropped. Then, in 1954, Coventry Council prepared a plan to establish a new sports pavilion. However, the Minister of Housing and Local Government found 'great difficulty in consenting to a loan of £50,560 for such a project at this juncture' and asked the Council to defer the plan until economic conditions were better.<sup>2</sup> Although the Minister approved another plan to provide a municipal golf course in 1957, the scheme remained on paper only during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>3</sup> A joint committee report submitted to the Coventry Council in 1957 also criticised the Council's severe budgetary restriction on public open space development plans.<sup>4</sup>

However, the situation in general gradually improved, as the number of pitches, dressing and bathing facilities increased, particularly from around the middle 1950s. The number of association football pitches provided increased from 30 in 1948 to no less than 55 in 1958.<sup>5</sup> Rugby football pitches also increased from five to nine in the same decade.<sup>6</sup> Towards the end of 1953, a few municipal netball pitches became available in Coventry, in recognition of the fact that netball was one of the most booming women's sports in post-war Coventry. Thanks to a donation from Butlin's



Limited, a well known holiday camp company which many local people patronised, three netball pitches, together with nine association football pitches, six cricket squares, one rugby football pitch and one hockey pitch became available at Whitley Common in 1953.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the numbers of municipal facilities for other minor sports did not seem to increase much. The number of tennis courts, bowling greens, hockey pitches, miniature golf course and putting greens remained unchanged.<sup>8</sup> The Butts Stadium, the only municipally owned athletic stadium was not renovated for ten years. Although the City Council approved a renovation plan costing £48,000, the Minister of Housing and Local Government asked the Council to shelve the plan until the economic situation improved.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the most acute problem, the lack of adequate swimming facilities, was not solved, despite the fact that the Council gave a relatively high priority to the question. In 1953, Alderman S. Stringer, chairman of the Policy Advisory Committee, moved an amendment that the proposed new central swimming baths should take precedence over a new central library.<sup>10</sup> The City Council supported the amendment, with a unanimous vote. Pleasure swimming gained increased popularity in post-war Coventry, but there was only one municipal swimming bath, catering for a couple of hundred at any one time.<sup>11</sup> The plan for a new central swimming pool was a very ambitious one, in terms of both cost and scale. In the first post-war development plan, it was proposed that five more comprehensive bath and swimming facilities should be provided in various local wards, along

with the establishment of a central pool.<sup>12</sup> However, in 1954, Mr. A. Sharples, the Baths Superintendent, reported that his ideal was not to establish all the small community baths, but to erect one comprehensive central facility, which would have a swimming pool suitable for national and international competitions, including a club pool, a training pool and 30 slipper baths, together with accommodation for 1,330 spectators, sunbathing terraces, a games deck and a buffet. The three pools would accommodate 1,200 swimmers.<sup>13</sup> Mr. A. G. Ling, the City Architect, said that his design of the building aimed to make it 'a social centre', which would be free from the 'institution-like atmosphere' of traditional swimming baths.<sup>14</sup>

This was estimated to cost £882,000 in 1956, which was 'by far the largest single piece of expenditure ever contemplated by the Council'.<sup>15</sup> The Treasurer and the Baths Superintendent anticipated that nearly 90 per cent of the cost would be covered by a War Damage payment from central Government.<sup>16</sup> They also proposed that charges would be twice their present level, and estimated that the number of people using the new central baths would be five times their previous number.<sup>17</sup> Conservative Councillors argued that the bath should be financially self-supporting. However, the Labour group saw it as essentially 'a social service'.<sup>18</sup> Alderman S. Stringer, its leader, defended the baths plan, saying that there were some municipal projects, such as municipal orchestras and civic theatres, which it had never been possible to run on economic lines. The Conservatives' argument was lost at a meeting of the City Council in 1956,

and a modified plan for a second swimming pool in Coventry was approved.<sup>19</sup> However, the construction of the central baths was further delayed, and it was completed only in the middle of the next decade.

During the 1950s, there was one big change in the administration of the municipal parks: the advent of organised Sunday games on municipal recreation grounds. In 1955, the Gaelic Athletic Association, which wanted to stage 50 home matches a season, stated that Sunday was the traditional day for Irish football and hurling, and that there were 12 Gaelic football and hurling teams in Coventry, which had to travel to Birmingham to play on Sundays.<sup>20</sup> At first, their plea was declined by the Parks department. However, only a few weeks later, two more associations representing local cricket and football teams also applied for permission to play on Sundays.<sup>21</sup>

The Parks and Allotments Committee finally decided to recommend to the City Council that Sunday games on municipal recreation grounds should be allowed only on afternoons and with higher charges. Several church organisations and individuals sent protest letters to the City Council.<sup>22</sup> When the matter was considered by the full administration, a Councillor stated that he did not oppose Sunday recreation in the parks, but he was against 'competitive games on the Sabbath'. Another Councillor, who supported Sunday games, said that with Sunday games there would be fewer young delinquents and Teddy Boys. The motion in favour of change was finally passed by 30 votes against 12.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to the increasing demand for sports facilities, municipal allotments tended to be neglected by the public. Although there was a waiting list for allotments just after the war, by the middle of the 1950s many plots had become uncultivated. The Parks and Allotments Committee of the City Council had 24 permanent sites in the locality with 900 plots. However, only 763 of them were leased, and the committee estimated that fewer than 600 were cultivated.<sup>24</sup>

### Libraries and museum

After the re-opening of the central library during 1952 in the remaining portion of its bombed building, the original scheme to erect a brand new central library was gradually given lower priority in the Coventry reconstruction plan.<sup>25</sup> However, the local library services were certainly extended and enriched. In 1960, Coventry had an old central library, nine branch libraries and nine evening library centres, together with a gramophone record library.<sup>26</sup> As I described in chapter 5, the first shop library at Radford was found so successful that the Libraries, Art Gallery and Museums Committee decided to use another shop premises in the new suburb of Willenhall.<sup>27</sup> One year after this opened, a local newspaper reported that it was another big success.<sup>28</sup> In 1960, one more shop library was to open at Wyken.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, towards the end of the 1950s, the Libraries Committee proposed a new scheme for a travelling library service, because there were still many residents in areas

where there were no library services available, though this did not get approval from the Finance Committee.<sup>30</sup>

There is, however, evidence which suggests that the city library services were severely underfunded in the 1950s. A Government committee set up by the Minister of Education found that Coventry's spending on books in the year 1957-58 had been smaller than any other town of over 100,000 population. Coventry spent only 10.6 shillings per head, while Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which had the same population as Coventry, spent 26.9 shillings. The chairman of the Coventry Libraries Committee argued that Coventry was an exceptional case where many other things than buying books had to be done.<sup>31</sup> This particular fact, however, did not deter the local reading public from borrowing books.<sup>32</sup> As Table F in the Appendix shows, Coventry public libraries were well patronised throughout the 1950s. Television did not have any adverse effect on local borrowing habits.<sup>33</sup>

A start to the construction of the new gallery and museum building eventually occurred in 1955, after an additional donation of £100,000 from Sir Alfred Herbert. It was, however, only in 1960 that the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum opened under one roof, though we should note that this was the first newly completed art gallery and museum in post-war Britain.<sup>34</sup> The establishment of a modern art gallery and museum was important, at least for the local Labour politicians, in changing the image of the city. In 1959, Alderman H. B. W. Cresswell, a former Lord Mayor and vice-chairman of the Libraries, Art Gallery and Museums Committee, reported that 'a deficiency' of industrial

Coventry, which had no real art gallery of its own, was about to be corrected. He told the press that 'the pork butcher and publican mentality' of previous city councils was to blame.<sup>35</sup>

Another objective of the new art gallery and museum was to foster 'a wise sense of local patriotism'.<sup>36</sup> In 1957, the City Council appointed an Art Director, separate to the Museum Curator, and the policies of both art gallery and museum were outlined. The art gallery would be mainly used for touring exhibitions, partly because of financial reasons. Although there would be a small permanent collection, they were to be contemporary works but no abstract paintings and sculptures, except those works by local artists.<sup>37</sup> The museum also should 'set out to tell the story of Coventry', its geology and natural history, archeology, and most importantly industry.<sup>38</sup> In the financial year 1960-61, which was the first year of opening, attendances at the gallery and museum were high.<sup>39</sup>

### Community centres

As I described in Chapter 5, by the early 1950s the local authority recognised that the original intention, which saw community centres as a focal point for citizenship training in neighbourhood units, did not match the needs of the public. However, this does not mean that local people's demand for community centres was low. By early 1952, another community centre, Whoberley Hall, was opened, making seven centres in the city. The Director of Education happily reported that there were requests for establishing similar

centres in other neighbourhoods, which had 'only been retarded due to financial restrictions'.<sup>40</sup> The figures for paid membership at each community centre, of course, fluctuated year by year.<sup>41</sup> However, generally speaking, as the Table 8:1 shows, paid memberships of community associations were relatively stable.

**Table 8:1 Paid adult membership of local community centres, 1952 and 1960.**<sup>42</sup>

centres	1952	1960
Bell Green	282	306
Canley	400	311
Foleshill	not yet built	140
Pinley	363	259
Tile Hill	not yet built	182
Whitley Abbey	130	141
Whoberley Hall	50	124
Cheylesmore	310	322
Holbrook	600	375
Wyken	not yet built	393

Throughout the 1950s, various sectional activities and classes were held at each centre, though the average number of enrollments for each activity was small, something between 10 and 25.<sup>43</sup> The success of various sectional activities largely depended on the secretary's or organiser's personality and enthusiasm, and an adequate and comfortable provision of accommodation and facilities. Classes such as those to do with crafts, fitness and dance, could always attract enough local people. So could activities such as whist drives and recreational sports, especially football, cricket, table tennis, and even judo.<sup>44</sup>

However, wardens and the other handful of people who ran the community centres were not satisfied with this situation. The Secretary of Cheylesmore Community Centre expressed his displeasure at the members' instrumental attitude towards the centre: 'there seems to be a general feeling that sections are complete in themselves and, therefore, most of our sections have little sense of unity within the community of the Centre'.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the community centres continued to fail in attracting existing local voluntary organisations. An annual report of the Holbrook Community Association noted in 1958: 'It remains a mystery why only three local organisations are affiliated to the Association'.<sup>46</sup>

There was also a tendency for gender segregation in local community centres. Community centres seemed to benefit women, as well as pensioners. The Secretary of the Holbrooks Community Centre compiled a report about the difficulty of getting male members into the centre:

Men do not use the Centre. Women who attend activities here have stated that they come to the Community Centre while husbands prefer to go somewhere where they can get a glass of beer...<sup>47</sup>

The Secretary also complained that the centre experienced 'difficulty in finding enough men to erect a fence for [the] playground', although some local working men's club buildings had been swiftly established by men's voluntary labour. Furthermore, it was reported that the darts club of the centre had been pressured by the Coventry and District Darts League to move its headquarters into a public house,



because visiting teams disliked the dry canteen. Thus, the secretary asked the local authority about the possibility of obtaining a liquor trade licence, but without success.

Certainly, the LEA would not accept the suggestion of the "social-clubatisation" of community centres, which was proposed in the first post-war Coventry development plan. For the LEA, community centres should promote a healthy and responsible social and cultural life in the locality, along with adult education centres and youth centres. The Authority started to re-organise these three centres under this single perspective. In 1954, for the first time, the authority appointed a single warden for the Adult Education, Community and Youth Centres at Cheylesmore.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, from September 1955, cultural, educational or sport classes, which had been free, were now charged for as a part of adult education classes.<sup>49</sup> This meant that people had to pay, but at the same time that classes would be run by a teacher with a higher qualification. It was a policy which officially recognised the consumer-oriented use of the community centre, based on specialised and individualised interests and needs that had been in existence since the late 1940s. By the end of the 1950s, there were six adult education centres, seven community centres, and three adult education, community and youth centres under the control of the LEA. The local public from all over Coventry made use of these opportunities, with 3,000 community centre and 5,000 adult education participants.<sup>50</sup>

### The service of youth

In 1952, Coventry LEA was running 12 youth centres, with two full-time youth officers and about 100 wardens and assistants. Total nominal membership and average nightly attendance for the first two months of the year was reported as 1,532 and 1,027 respectively.<sup>51</sup> These are relatively lower figures compared with the 1,491, estimated by the Government Inspectors in 1946 for just nine centres. And the total subscription income for the municipal youth service reached its peak in the year 1949-50.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, in terms of membership, the attractiveness of the local youth centres had already reached its peak before the 1950s.

Against the national trend, various reports on the Coventry youth centres throughout the decade show that boy membership tended to exceed that of girls.<sup>53</sup> There was also a tendency towards age bias. Municipal youth centres looked after all young persons between 14 and 20 officially, but the Inspectors confirmed that most centres tended to be dominated by junior members under 16 years of age. Another feature about membership which should be pointed out is its uncertainty. Inspectors emphasised that there were many 'drifters', a proportion that might often make up nearly half of the members.<sup>54</sup>

Although many concerned voices were raised about their inadequacy, youth centre premises hardly improved during the 1950s. Most of them were using local school premises.<sup>55</sup> Some other centres shared premises with adult community centres, which tended to create formidable tensions between the young and adult users.<sup>56</sup> Various activities were organised both at each centre and centrally, with better

facilities and equipment than had been available in the 1940s. Although outdoor sports such as football, cricket, table tennis and badminton attracted enthusiasts<sup>57</sup>, the most popular activities were music orientated. Dancing and gramophone record-listening were popular activities. The Government Inspectors seemed relieved to see these being placed under firm control: 'Good training in social behaviour, as well as in ballroom dancing, is given in a cheerful atmosphere with a judicious mixture of the current "bop"'.<sup>58</sup>

Certainly, art and educational sessions failed to attract sufficient numbers of young persons, despite the efforts of officials in the LEA. Apart from dancing and listening to records, indoor games such as table tennis, billiards, darts and badminton were dominant activities throughout a year. In the summer of 1956, Government Inspectors reported disappointedly about the nights they spent at some youth centres: 'Present activities are chiefly badminton, table tennis, billiards, darts and listening to jazz records... In some ways this is more a play centre than a youth club...'.<sup>59</sup>

The Inspectors recognised that young people valued youth centres as 'a place to come to for chatting in warm and friendly surroundings',<sup>60</sup> or a place where they could 'drop in and out and take part in loosely arranged activities in a casual atmosphere, without carrying any responsibilities'.<sup>61</sup> However, the Inspectors were not convinced of the necessity for such facilities. The LEA's inspection into municipal youth centres in later years was

more sympathetic.<sup>62</sup> Yet, the LEA as a whole, too, lacked enthusiasm in meeting youngsters' peculiar leisure needs. In 1953 the establishment of an informal and considerably less organised central youth club was once again proposed,<sup>63</sup> and the Education Director favoured the plan. But it was dropped, as a plan for a central youth cafe had once disappeared in the 1940s.<sup>64</sup>

Local newspapers often commented on 'the problems of youth'. Church leaders and some parents expressed their concern about the bad influence of "American-style comics" and "pin-up magazines" on young people, though Council leaders did not take any action against them.<sup>65</sup> However, the main targets for criticism were Teddy boys and girls: their distinct dress and hair style, their love of rock and roll, and their craze for certain idols. It was suggested that there was a connection between these youth cultures and various petty crimes. On the other hand, the Coventry Council was often blamed for youth vandalism and hooliganism because it had not provided places for young people to go in their spare time.<sup>66</sup>

However, there were various reasons why Coventry's Labour local authority particularly could not, or would not, take effective action on the emergent youth culture. Firstly, there had been strong central pressure to reduce commitments to the youth service, both financially and morally, since the end of the 1940s, especially after 1951.<sup>67</sup> The Conservative Government, in particular, imposed various restrictions on the cost of capital investment, local government expenditure and grants for youth

organisations. It should be emphasised that the Coventry LEA gave up new initiatives such as the youth cafe and central youth club schemes not because of moral backwardness, but because of these admonitions.

Secondly, the significance of youth delinquency in the latter half of 1950s Coventry tended to be exaggerated. Careful reading of the local press suggests that only a very limited minority of Teddy boys and girls committed crime. There are many newspaper reports which noted that the majority of them were ordinary teenagers, drawn from a cross-section of the community.<sup>68</sup> Many local cinema managers were certainly nervous about teenagers' rowdiness in the 1950s. A city centre cinema wanted someone like an ex-boxer, who could safely eject young trouble-makers.<sup>69</sup> A suburban cinema banned teenage girls, because boys behaved themselves when girls were absent.<sup>70</sup> It was a common opinion among cinema managers that girls were 'every bit as bad as boys'.<sup>71</sup> Many cinemas, especially suburban ones, had black lists of teenagers who were banned, but several managers claimed that they included 'only a dozen or so' names.<sup>72</sup> As the annual reports of the Chief Constable stated, the increasing crime of the late 1950s was committed by persons of all ages and could not be blamed on any particular age group.<sup>73</sup>

Given this situation, it is not surprising that at the Council level, the subject of 'youth' was not discussed very much. We may say that the local authority did not respond to the emergent youth culture sensitively during the 1950s. It is true that a Deputy Mayor refused to intervene over a 'no

Teddy boy' rule at a cafe in the city centre precinct.<sup>74</sup> But as it was privately run, intervention would have been unwise. It is true, too, that the Coventry Council set more restrictive rules on the minimum age and the latest time for cinema admissions of children than ones proposed by the Home Office.<sup>75</sup> The Council also passed a bye-law which gave cinema managers 'the power to take action against offenders for unruliness'.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, it should be noted that many municipal community centres, beside youth centres, made a great effort to meet the needs of local modern teenagers. Although certain tensions between young persons and adult users of community centres did not disappear, new projects for the young generation, such as "Teenage Dance Clubs", proved very popular.<sup>77</sup> An innovative project, the "Young Stagers' Club" which aimed to attract ordinary Teddy boys and girls, started at the newly erected municipal theatre in early 1960.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, at the end of the decade, the local Labour Party opened a coffee bar at its headquarters, for the under 25s.<sup>79</sup>

In 1960, after the publication of the Albemarle report which strongly criticised the Government on the inadequacy of the youth service in England and Wales, the Coventry LEA convened a public conference on the subject. It was reported that there was 'a unanimous approval of a "coffee bar" type of approach to attract the "unclubables"',<sup>80</sup> a subject which was first discussed in the immediate post-war years and had been never realised. It is true that the achievements of the Coventry youth service in the 1940s and 1950s were modest, but the Coventry local authority's

attitudes towards the emergent youth culture did not seem hostile, but more sympathetic than has been suggested.<sup>81</sup>

### Civic entertainments

In Coventry, as opposed to Bolton, classical music failed to obtain municipal support. There were several informal efforts by the Coventry Corporation to create more interest in high-brow music in the locality. From 1958, an annual Coventry Festival of Music was held, without any financial assistance from the Arts Council or Coventry Corporation, but guaranteed by patrons including the Mayor and the Town Clerk.<sup>82</sup> The London Symphony Orchestra, the Liverpool Philharmonic and the Royal Philharmonic gave concerts at the Coventry Theatre. However, the theatre was packed only on the last day of the festival week.<sup>83</sup> It is little wonder that a plan for establishing a new concert hall remained as a blueprint and was never given serious consideration. Instead, the municipal entertainments service in Coventry focused on the theatre.

The need to establish a civic theatre for professional drama was agreed among the local Labour Party officials in the early 1950s.<sup>84</sup> During a special meeting with the Arts Council at the end of the 1940s, Coventry local authority had sought advice from the Council about the most suitable arrangement for arts buildings, theatres and concert halls.<sup>85</sup> Officials of the Arts Council suggested that, mainly based on its population size, Coventry should have three theatres: one large theatre for touring companies, musical comedy and ballet activities that currently took

place at the existing Hippodrome; one civic theatre for professional drama, with seating for 1,000 to 1,200; and one intimate amateur theatre for an audience of 500. They also said that, for musical activities, a large civic hall and a small concert hall were needed.

The Arts Council played an important role in the creation of the Coventry civic theatre. The Council had been running the Midland Theatre Company, based at the Coventry Technical College, since 1946. However, the Company had experienced considerable financial difficulty.<sup>86</sup> The Arts Council gave up the policy of directly running theatre companies, after Section 132 of the Local Government Act of 1948 allowed local authorities to engage in municipal theatre enterprise. Local governments would now spend up to a sixpenny rate in the pound for any municipal entertainment project. After 1951, the Arts Council had strongly tried to persuade the leading members of the Coventry Council to make the Midland Theatre Company into a trust, a non-profit distributing company, financially guaranteed by both the Arts Council and the Coventry Corporation.<sup>87</sup>

At first, the City Council would not get involved in what it saw as the risky theatre business, fearing it would be a burden on the rates. As I described in Chapter 5, the result of the local referendum in 1947 had rejected municipal intervention in providing an entertainments service, though a year later the Local Government Act of 1948 made this irrelevant. The City Treasurer reported to the Policy Advisory Committee that the Corporation should not subsidise the company, but provide a theatre building to



let.<sup>88</sup> However, at a meeting with the representatives of the Coventry Council in 1952, Arts Council officials warned that unless substantial support was forthcoming from the Corporation in terms of both finance and theatre accommodation, the Midland Theatre Company would cease to exist.<sup>89</sup> Eventually, the Corporation approved £3,500 in financial assistance to the Midland Theatre Company, which was then equivalent to 'a sum not exceeding the product of a halfpenny rate'.<sup>90</sup> It was agreed that a part of this financial assistance was for maintaining the Midland Theatre Company, and a part of it was put aside towards the cost of a new civic theatre.

In view of the cost, labour and materials required, some efforts were made first to convert an existing building into a theatre.<sup>91</sup> However, in early 1953, the Policy Advisory Committee finally decided to construct a new building.<sup>92</sup> It is probable that the local Labour Party began to think that a modern municipal theatre, together with other facilities being built, would cement a new civic pride. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government soon expressed its concern about the resources required.<sup>93</sup> In May 1954, an application was made to the Minister for a loan sanction of £164,369 to cover the new civic theatre.<sup>94</sup> However, the scheme was delayed because the Minister insisted on holding a public inquiry,<sup>95</sup> and it was only in late 1955 that he agreed to sanction a loan.<sup>96</sup>

By this time, many provincial theatres had been already experiencing considerable difficulties in continuing their business. This was well known to the Coventry public through

a local conservative newspaper's campaign against the civic theatre plan,<sup>97</sup> but there were few who were active in their opposition. Only two objections were made at the public enquiry, neither from the local commercial entrepreneurs.<sup>98</sup> However, apart from a few enthusiasts, there is little evidence that general interest among ordinary people was high. In fact, local people seem to have been uninterested in the plan, rather than supportive of it.

There was one more thing that the Coventry local authority had to decide: how the theatre should be managed. There was a persistent general fear among officials in the City Council that municipal involvement in the theatre management would be politically risky. The Conservative local newspaper criticised the project as an extravagance.<sup>99</sup> Thus, budgets had to be kept within close financial limits, and the project should be preferably self-supporting. The Policy Advisory Committee enquired into how other municipal theatres were managed and came to a series of cautious conclusions.<sup>100</sup> Although some Conservative Councillors insisted that the lease of the building to private entrepreneurs was the best solution, the Council finally agreed to set up a non-profit-making independent trust to lease the theatre from Coventry Corporation, which was in fact the original suggestion of the Arts Council.<sup>101</sup>

It was named the Belgrade Theatre Trust, and was guaranteed by the Coventry City Council and the Arts Council.<sup>102</sup> Representatives of the Council would form a majority on the management council of the Trust, in order to maintain control over its financial aspects.<sup>103</sup> The Midland

Theatre Company was finally closed down when the Belgrade Theatre Trust was established.<sup>104</sup> As the opening of the Belgrade Theatre approached, Alderman Hodgkinson, an influential Labour leader in Coventry, was reported as saying that 'the Council had been mainly occupied with utilitarian things, such as houses and schools', but had now reached the point when 'amenities and cultural facilities' should be tackled.<sup>105</sup>

The Belgrade Theatre itself was officially opened in March 1958. This was the first new professional theatre to be built in post-war Britain.<sup>106</sup> There were many other innovative aspects, both in the design of the building and in its management policy. *The Belgrade was also the first theatre which vigorously sought a new role for the professional repertory theatre outside the metropolis.* The first annual report of the Belgrade Theatre Trust described the most difficult problem for its management as holding on to actors and actresses, because of the attractions of film and television work.<sup>107</sup> The policy of the Theatre was, therefore, first, to employ younger actors, actresses and staff, and second, to allow them short-term contracts with other entertainment media. The theatre building was designed as a comfortable modern playhouse which would satisfy a British audience, most of whom regarded 'a visit to the theatre as a "night out"'.<sup>108</sup> More over, in order to keep young talent, it included furnished self-contained artists' flats for the company and staff, as a part of the theatre complex.<sup>109</sup>

The theatre also tried hard to establish a new relationship with the local community. Firstly, the building was designed in line with 'the theatre as a social centre' idea, in which the building was to be fully used for various cultural activities, such as 'exhibitions, concerts, lunch-time stereophonic record sessions, poetry readings and lectures'.<sup>110</sup> This experiment was admired by the Arts Council.<sup>111</sup> The Belgrade Theatre was also noted for its provision of a balanced but ambitious programme: a mixture of popular and serious works, as well as classic and new plays. A few new plays were transferred to the Royal Court Theatre, London,<sup>112</sup> while others explored local themes, for instance working-class life in Coventry.<sup>113</sup>

The Belgrade Theatre opened various new channels in order to build up a local audience. Contacts with local amateur dramatic societies, schools, firms and other voluntary organisations were established.<sup>114</sup> The membership of the Theatre Club for adults rose from less than 500 to 1,200 in the first six months.<sup>115</sup> The most impressive effort, however, was the one to get young people involved. The Under 20 Club was launched to encourage them to come to the theatre, and soon had more than 3,000 members.<sup>116</sup> It was well known both locally and nationally that the audience at the Belgrade was youthful.<sup>117</sup> In 1962, it was observed that two-thirds of the audience for *Macbeth* were 'adolescents' throughout its run.<sup>118</sup>

How successful was this new municipal enterprise? Attendance measured in terms of percentage of box office capacity dropped from 55 per cent to 41 per cent between

1958 and 1966.<sup>119</sup> Local newspapers repeatedly reported its failure to be financially self-supporting,<sup>120</sup> although the deficits occurred only after massive payments of rent, rates and insurance to the Corporation, which amounted to more than £17,000 per year at the end of the 1950s. The Arts Council was delighted and praised the fact that 88 per cent of the total operating cost in 1958-59, which included this very heavy rental charge, was paid for by revenue.<sup>121</sup> Against this, for example, total grants were less than £14,000 for 1959-60, of which Coventry Corporation's contribution was just £5,000.<sup>122</sup> In fact, Coventry Corporation's financial commitment remained small and firmly controlled. For the financial year 1961-62, the total net expenditure on civic entertainments in Coventry amounted to only just over a fourpenny rate, of which the special expenditure of that year on the new museum and art gallery accounted for more than three quarters.<sup>123</sup> It is not realistic to call the Corporation's role extravagant or luxurious. Overall, with a very modest expenditure, the establishment of the Belgrade theatre showed a possible role for local government in supporting declining local repertory theatres, and it also demonstrated the various initiatives, which civic theatres were now expected to practise within a community.

## 2. Commercial Leisure

In the 1950s, pessimistic forecasts about the future of provincial commercial theatres were often heard. However, the experience of the Coventry Theatre (the ex-Hippodrome),

which was the only commercial theatre in the city by 1955, told a rather different story. In 1956, Mr. S. H. Newsome, managing director of the Coventry Theatre, backed a "fewer and bigger shows" policy as the best way for a provincial theatre to survive. He adopted a three season system, involving winter pantomime, autumn 'birthday shows', and a long summer show. Variety programmes would also change from twice-nightly to once-nightly and be of better quality.<sup>124</sup> The manager confidently stated that pantomime had become increasingly bigger business in the 1950s, at least in the Midlands. In 1955, attendances at pantomimes were a record, with over 750,000 attending four major productions.<sup>125</sup> In the spring of 1957, Coventry Theatre staged, *Aladdin*, for 14 weeks with 137 performances. The manager claimed that this had been the most successful pantomime, not only at the theatre but also among all provincial theatres: 213,062 paid to see it.<sup>126</sup>

It might be argued that television did not destroy the living theatres, but revived them, at least during the 1950s. This was the case for major provincial commercial theatres, if not for the smaller ones. Mr. Newsome said that television could not kill people's interests in living theatre, though it had changed people's expectation - television had educated the public to expect nothing but stars.<sup>127</sup> Smaller provincial theatres could not meet this higher expectation, because they could not afford to pay for stars, staff and first class stage settings. The cost of an attractive big show was certainly expensive. At the Coventry

Theatre, a 'birthday show' with a six week run cost £20,000 in 1957.<sup>128</sup>

When the Belgrade Theatre was opened in 1958, Mr. Newsome welcomed it,<sup>129</sup> and two years later, he was still quite confident about his policy. A local newspaper reported:

Mr. Newsome's formula is quite simple. Believing that the theatre will never be a habit, but rather an occasion, he has evolved a type of spectacle which makes it an occasion. By staging bigger shows he is drawing on a wider audience.<sup>130</sup>

With this formula, the Coventry Theatre succeeded in attracting people from surrounding areas, many of whom had never been to any theatre before. It was reported that there was an 'enormous increase of [the] coach party trade'.<sup>131</sup>

However, this successful formula became ineffective as the 1960s started. In the autumn of 1962, Mr. Newsome argued that commercial living theatres should be given financial assistance: 'I think places like these are as much an amenity as repertory theatres; more of an amenity in the sense that they attract four times as many people'.<sup>132</sup>.

In Chapter 5, I described how, as early as the late 1940s, local cinema and public house managers worried about a relative decline in their businesses. In the course of the 1950s, people's disposable income and spare time certainly increased. However, this situation was not to favour either the cinemas or public houses. Public house business steadily declined in the 1950s. Firstly, the pubs could not sustain their relative monopoly status in the drinking trade itself.

The number of licensed social clubs in the locality, which were affiliated to the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, more than doubled, from 31 in 1951 to 65 in 1959.<sup>133</sup> Off-licensed premises, too, increased from 128 in 1951 to 142 in 1960.<sup>134</sup> It was also reported that pre-fabricated milk-bars, which had appeared in 'a spate' since the war, had succeeded in keeping the young generation from visiting public houses.<sup>135</sup> The owner of the Milano Club, Radford, was trying to attract "rock 'n' roll addicts" from the public houses, providing foaming coffee instead of pints. Public houses themselves started to provide various entertainment programmes.<sup>136</sup> Coventry's town planning officers gave the following account of the alterations in local preferences:

There have been significant changes in drinking habits in Coventry since 1951. The wide car ownership had diminished the importance of the 'local' and has led to increased visits to public houses over a wide area. Sales of beer and other drinks for home consumption and to social clubs has affected the total "on sales" of public houses, and there is an increased trade at licensed restaurants. All these factors have tended to reduce the monopoly of the public houses.<sup>137</sup>

A wide-ranging exchange of tied public houses, as well as amalgamation among the brewers, took place in 1960. About 10 public houses which had been owned by Ind Coope & Allsop went to Ansells Brewery Ltd. A few of those of Peter Walker & Company Ltd and some 20 of Atkinsons Brewery's houses went to Mitchells and Butlers. All these three breweries were in Birmingham. Two Northampton breweries which owned about 40 public houses in Coventry, Northampton Brewery Company Ltd



and Phipps & Company Ltd, merged into Phipps Northampton Brewery. These were the biggest amalgamations in the locality since 1948 when Bass, Ratcliff & Gretton took over more than 20 public houses from Phillips and Marriott, the last Coventry brewery. By the early 1960s, the five biggest breweries, Mitchells and Butlers (Birmingham), Bass, Ratcliff & Gretton (Burton on Trent), Phipps Northampton (Northampton), Ansells (Birmingham), and Atkinsons (Birmingham) owned more than three-quarters of the public houses in Coventry.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, in order to avoid unprofitable competition and to secure a solid profit, some of these breweries launched joint ownership of the pubs in Coventry, in which the beers of both companies were on sale.<sup>139</sup>

Between the year ended March 1951 and 1954, there was almost no change in cinema provision in Coventry. The total seating capacity remained at about 21,000, in 19 cinemas. However, total admissions for the same period dropped from 7,041,000 to 6,192,000.<sup>140</sup> This meant that every person in the locality, who had been to the cinema on average 27 times in 1950, went to the cinemas only 24 times in 1954.<sup>141</sup> The proportional decline in cinema-going in Coventry was faster than the national average, where the corresponding figures were 28 and 26 respectively. Moreover, if we compare Coventry with other British towns which had more than a 100,000 population, Coventrians' relative indifference to the cinema becomes much more impressive. In these cities, on average, every person went to the cinema as many as 37 times

in 1951 and 34 times in 1954. Even among the Midland cities, the figures for Coventry were the lowest, as the following table shows:

**Table 8:2 Annual cinema admissions per head of population in Midland region, 1950/51 and 1954.<sup>142</sup>**

towns	ratio of people to seats(1954)	admissions	
		(1950/51)	(1954)
Coventry	12.3	27	24
Birmingham	11.5	34	30
Wolverhampton	10.7	34	32
Leicester	10.0	36	30
Stoke-on-Trent	9.2	38	33
Nottingham	8.0	43	38

From the mid-1950s onward, the difficulty of the local suburban cinema business increased. First, in 1954, three suburban cinemas, the Rivoli, Roxy and Plaza, which had been leased to Joseph Cinemas Ltd., changed hands. At the Coventry Magistrate Court, 'a distress warrant' was granted against Joseph Cinema Ltd. for rate arrears of some £550.<sup>143</sup> In 1955, the Odeon Group (later Rank Organisation) gave up running its Astoria at Albany Road and leased it.<sup>144</sup> Another suburban cinema, the Lyric Theatre at Holbrooks Lane, was sold to Major N. Dent, who already controlled the Standard Cinema, Tile Hill Lane.<sup>145</sup> Then in 1956, four suburban local cinemas were sold or closed down. Only one, the Ritz (formerly Dovedale) at Longford Road, eventually remained open, after massive modernisation.<sup>146</sup> One smaller cinema at Stoney Stanton Road, the Prince of Wales, was sold to a local Irish organisation, St. Finbarr's Hurling and Football Club.<sup>147</sup> The club announced that it would re-open

not as a cinema but as a social and recreation centre for Irish people in Coventry. Another cinema, the Redesdale (later Roxy) at Foleshill Road was also turned into a private club.<sup>148</sup> The Globe Cinema at Hillfields, which was owned by the Rank Organisation, was closed down at the end of 1956, to re-open as a luxury modern ballroom with a Spanish style restaurant.<sup>149</sup>

In October 1956, Major Dent, who had acquired the Standard, Lyric and Ritz, denied that cinema was dying, but admitted that the public wanted 'the best possible product and the highest standard of comfort'.<sup>150</sup> He equipped the Lyric with a 33 feet wide screen, on which CinemaScope, as well as Vista Vision and Super Scope films, could be projected.<sup>151</sup> The Ritz was also completely refurbished, with parking facilities, at a cost of £15,000.<sup>152</sup> In 1957, even cinemas in the city centre were not doing as good business as before. The Crown, which was taken over by Major Dent in that year, was renovated with £20,000 worth of improvements. It also took a more discriminating policy in presenting films. It re-opened as the Paris Luxury Continental Cinema, which specialised in showing first-run continental films.<sup>153</sup>

The Rank Organisation continually pursued its policy of rationalisation, either by closing down cinemas or exploiting the increasing popularity of other entertainments, notably dancing. Rank converted the restaurant of the Gaumont cinema into a dance studio in 1958,<sup>154</sup> and towards the end of the 1950s, it permanently closed two further suburban cinemas, the Astoria and the

Regal. Mr. W. Latter, the last lessee of the Astoria, finally decided to close in the early summer of 1959, after two years' steady fall in attendances. During the last few years, he had struggled to survive with the minimum of staff - his wife was cashier, his 17 years old son was projectionist and his 13 years old daughter was refreshment sales girl - but in vain.<sup>155</sup> The Regal was put up for sale in 1960.<sup>156</sup>

The independent cinema exhibitors were badly hit. By the end of the decade, the possibility of survival for these small independent entrepreneurs became very limited. They had to fight not only against high entertainments tax, high wages for staff and the high cost of the latest equipment, but also against the monopoly on first-run films operated by the big circuits.<sup>157</sup> In a few years around the turn of the decade, cinemas run by the two local independent companies, the Orr Circuit and the Philpot Circuit, had gone. Mr. C. H. Orr stated that he was running the Plaza cinema at a loss of £2,000 a year for the last 18 months, despite desperate efforts to attract audiences including presenting wrestling matches once a week<sup>158</sup>; the Opera House, another holding of Orr Circuit in the city centre, was demolished<sup>159</sup>; The Forum and the Savoy, the biggest suburban cinemas in Coventry owned by the Philpot Circuit, were also demolished, both sites becoming bowling centres.<sup>160</sup> Another independent small suburban cinema, the Continental, which specialised in quality foreign films, also closed down and was demolished.<sup>161</sup> It was owned and run by a local man, who was the first to start a regular presentation of continental

films in the Midland during the early 1950s .<sup>162</sup> It probably lost its customers after the opening of the Paris in 1957.

Changes in people's priorities about spending money were regarded as one of the big problems for the cinema industry. An anonymous representative of a big cinema company told a local newspaper in 1955 that Coventry people's spending centred on their homes, repaying mortgages for their houses and paying-off hire-purchase for their furniture, so that they no longer bothered to travel into city centre cinemas. The effect of television was less of a problem.<sup>163</sup> Although youngsters had always made up a high proportion of cinema goers, one local cinema owner observed that the range of age groups in the cinema audience had become narrower:

From 23 [years old] on, young people have the commitments of a home television, payments on a car perhaps, and so on. The wife works, and both come home late. This goes on for two years or so, then at 25 to 26 the first member of the family arrives and then there is no surplus cash. ... The general standards of cinemas has not progressed at the same rate as people have become accustomed to in their own homes.<sup>164</sup>

It is probable that 'rowdyism' amongst young people at local cinemas, which I described in the section on youth service, further affected the decline of cinema admissions. Teenagers must have felt the hostility of managers, while more respectable and senior members of the public were discouraged in going to cinemas by the presence of young people. Increasing alternative entertainment was probably a larger element in causing the decline of cinemas in

Coventry. When the Plaza just outside the city centre closed in the summer of 1960, the owner stated:

[the] decline of admissions ... was due to the increased recreational amenities in and around Coventry, allied to the fact that more people in the city have now some form of transport. T.V. was not the only cause. Jazz clubs and similar organisations drew many young people, and many former cinema-goers now found it possible to visit theatres and other attractions in other towns.<sup>165</sup>

In the first post-war development plan, it was suggested that the number of local cinemas should be increased.

However, by 1962, the number of Coventry commercial cinemas had dropped from 19 to just seven, and by the middle of the 1960s to only four.<sup>166</sup> In 1960, a local newspaper reported that on weekend evenings local cinemas could still attract big crowds, and that there were full houses when first class films were shown.<sup>167</sup> Cinema-going had become an occasion, and no longer a habit.

For more than a decade after 1945, commercial places for both dancing and dancing tuition in Coventry were relatively limited. Apart from the Rialto Casino at Mosely Avenue, the major ballrooms in the first half of the 1950s were confined to those in local factories, such as Matrix, GEC and Courtaulds, which opened to the public mainly during the weekends.<sup>168</sup> All were outside the city centre. The numbers of local dancing schools also remained relatively low in the early 1950s. In the local telephone directory of 1948, there were only five Coventry addresses where people

could get 'dancing and dramatic instruction'. In 1952, the corresponding figure was still low, being seven.<sup>169</sup>

However, in the second half of the fifties, dancing premises in and around the central area increased. In 1956, the Centre Ballroom opened. In 1957, Rank Organisation converted its cinema into a luxury dance hall, the Majestic. In 1960, Mecca Ltd. opened probably the most luxurious new ballroom in the country, the Locarno, again in the city centre.<sup>170</sup> The premises was leased from the Coventry Corporation, and Council officials warmly welcomed the new dance hall. A local newspaper enthused: '[the city] architects are planning now with one aim in view - to bring gaiety and social life into the city centre, often deserted once the shops and offices have closed'.<sup>171</sup> The capacity of the ballroom was 2,500, and it opened every night on a club basis.<sup>172</sup> The front stalls of the Ritz Luxury Cinema at Longford were replaced by a dance floor in 1960, and a combined cinema-dance club, the Under 25 Club, started. Membership had reached 250 within three weeks.<sup>173</sup>

The places where people could get dance instruction also increased. In 1958, Rank Organisation again tried to exploit the increased popularity of dancing, by converting its cinema restaurant into a dancing studio. It was the twentieth such premises opened by Rank in the country.<sup>174</sup> Between 1956 and 1960, the total number of places for dancing instruction increased from 11 to 17.<sup>175</sup>

In Coventry, mid-week dances were not particularly popular, though all premiere local ballrooms were reported packed every weekend, as were the dancing studios which had

a ballroom atmosphere on Saturdays.<sup>176</sup> The Locarno ballroom offered specialised dancing according to the day of the week: Mondays were for teenagers; Tuesdays for old time dancers; Wednesdays for the over 21s; Thursdays for general dances; Fridays for private parties; Saturdays for palais dances; and Sundays for club members.<sup>177</sup> Interestingly enough, two hour lunch-time dancing sessions at the Locarno were very popular.<sup>178</sup> Although factory workers had some difficulty in joining these sessions because of a "collar and tie or no entry" policy, bus drivers enjoyed themselves in their Corporation uniforms.

Throughout the 1950s, patrons were mostly teenagers and young persons. In the middle of the 1950s, the veteran local ballroom manager of the Rialto commented on the dancing culture of youth: 'young people like crowds and enjoy dancing on a packed floor. The people we get here come to dance for dancing's sake. They don't want snobbery; they don't want intervals when they can just sit and talk. They are just the ordinary boy and girl in the street who come for a night out'.<sup>179</sup>

Management attitudes towards young patrons at the two big ballrooms, the Majestic and Locarno, were cautious. They tried to please young customers, but at the same time they would not tolerate 'hooliganism'. The manager of the Majestic said: 'I don't want teenagers to think they are not welcome, because they are, and we have nothing against Teddy boys, so long as they behave themselves'.<sup>180</sup> At the Locarno, 14 supervisors attended the floor allegedly treating trouble-makers 'with diplomacy and tact'.<sup>181</sup>



Within a few months of its opening, however, three drunken youngsters broke the head supervisor's jaw at the Locarno, though this seemed to be the only serious trouble at this time on local dance floors.<sup>182</sup>

We should note that the extent and duration of the local demand for dancing was limited, despite its increasing popularity. By the beginning of 1962, the Majestic was sold by the Rank Organisation to Mecca Ltd. It was reported that the hall had been used mainly for bingo sessions in its last days. Although the new manager of the Orchid, the renamed Majestic, said that he felt 'a demand for another good-class dance hall' in the central area, he planned to hold dance sessions there on only four days a week.<sup>183</sup> The dance population in Coventry was probably not yet large enough to keep two big dance halls fairly profitable, though it was claimed that more than 2,000 dancers attended the Locarno on Saturday nights.<sup>184</sup>

During the 1950s, Coventry City Football Club was always in financial difficulties. Having been disbanded in the second world war, during the immediate post-war years it struggled to recover its pre-war standard by recruiting established players. Net outlay on transfer fees for 1949 and 1950 was £48,916, and losses incurred over the period 1947 to 1950 amounted to nearly £30,000.<sup>185</sup> This commitment was workable, because there was a guaranteed system of special bank overdrafts for football clubs.<sup>186</sup> However, this declined from £20,000 to £10,000 at the end of 1951 and was finally ended by the Treasury on December 31st, 1952.

Thus, in order to reduce their considerable bank overdraft, the directors of the club had to reverse the previous transfer policy. They created net credits on transfer fees of £11,180 in 1951 and £7,000 in 1952.<sup>187</sup> This austere transfer policy seemed eventually to cause a serious deterioration in the club's performance, even if the direct problem occurred because of the manager's poor-replacement of a key player.<sup>188</sup> At the end of season 1951-52, City were relegated from the Second Division to the Third Division South.

As the Table J in the Appendix shows, the peak average attendance at home league matches was 26,683 for season 1950-51. In the first Third Division South season of 1952-53, City lost more than 9,000 supporters per home match. Anxiety among the directors increased. It was generally supposed that in order to cover expenditure, home gates of 18,000 were the minimum required.<sup>189</sup> Since there was no hope of a return to the Second Division because of poor performances, there was a further decline in attendance.

Floodlights were installed at Highfield Road before season 1953-54 with money raised entirely by the Supporters' Club.<sup>190</sup> The average gates for the season, however, were the lowest in the post-war period. In the middle of season 1953-54, the manager was sacked. By that time, the shareholders had become dissatisfied with the club's position in the lower half of the Third Division South. As a director confessed at the general meeting of the club, the present gate receipts would keep only 12 players, despite a Third Division club requiring at least 27. The board of

directors proposed a "Save Coventry City" plan, in which debentures would be issued to strengthen the financial position of the club without selling players. It was, however, too late. The directors were forced to resign at the stormy annual meeting of 1954.<sup>191</sup>

The new board of six directors issued £40,000 worth of debentures immediately.<sup>192</sup> The incoming chairman, Mr W. E. Shanks, reported: 'Professional football today is a business and I shall look upon it as such, for I am convinced that it is the only way to get on'.<sup>193</sup> A substantial number of supporters eagerly came back to see City in the following two seasons, during which time the club was often challenging for promotion. The chairman of City was certainly aggressive in promoting the club. In 1956, the British football world was surprised by the appointment of an internationally famous coach, Jesse Carver, as manager of City. George Raynor, another very successful coach in European football, was appointed as Carver's right hand man.<sup>194</sup> However, the directors' drive caused serious problems. They could not resist intervening in the club's daily management. On one occasion, a director walked into the dressing room at half-time and 'played merry hell with the players'.<sup>195</sup> George Raynor also recalled that there was a lack of club spirit among some players:

Some of the players who were playing badly didn't seem to care. On at least one occasion I threatened to get into touch with the Football League about a player and have his contract cancelled. His reply underlined the weakness of the whole situation. 'All right', he said, 'carry on. I can get fourteen pounds a week sweeping the floor in a factory'.<sup>196</sup>

Then there were the frequent changes of City manager. In just four years to April 1958, the manager was changed six times.

As the dream of promotion faded away, gate receipts fell, and the directors' anxiety about the financial position surfaced again. During season 1956-57, to the supporters' disappointment, Reg Matthews, the first City player to have become a full international for England, was sold to a First Division club, Chelsea, for a record transfer fee of £20,000.<sup>197</sup> The board was, a local newspaper reported, 'making hurried plans to cover a bank overdraft, a regular weekly gate loss of £250 and ... a summer wages bill of over £6,000.'<sup>198</sup> As from 1956, City's ground rate was increased three times, and expenditure rose steadily. Entertainments tax amounted to £12,336 or 19 per cent of the gross takings for the season 1955-56.<sup>199</sup>

Although entertainments tax was abolished in the 1957 Budget, season 1956-57 was one of the most disappointing ever.<sup>200</sup> In April 1957, the Shareholders' Association demanded that the directors hold an extraordinary general meeting to explain City's deterioration. The Association had only 64 members but controlled a big enough portion of shares to force the directors to convene the meeting.<sup>201</sup> While the tension between the shareholders and directors rose, it was revealed that 21 players who were all over thirty years of age had refused to re-sign for the next season, because of conflict with the manager.<sup>202</sup> It was not only the club spirit but also the flood lights installed in

1953 that had deteriorated to below standard. New floodlights were installed in 1957 with £15,000 donated again from the Supporters' Club, which was running a pool to raise the money.<sup>203</sup>

After season 1957-58, Coventry City were relegated to the new Fourth Division. The chairman, Mr. Shanks, resigned, after again censuring the playing staff in the dressing room towards the end of the season.<sup>204</sup> Financial difficulties persisted, and some shareholders, who wanted to see the club's promotion, were ready to loan substantial money for buying players. Another member of the Shareholders' Association proposed a shareholders' democracy by making unissued shares available for 'the man-on-the-terrace'.<sup>205</sup> However, both the manager, Mr. Frith, and directors declined this offer.<sup>206</sup>

However, after returning to the Third Division within just one season, the directors decided to use the unissued share capital to the maximum, revealing that the club did not have adequate money to spend on transfer fees.<sup>207</sup> For the first time, City issued its shares to the public in April 1960. The total amount offered in the share issue was about £21,000, some 85,000 shares at five shillings each. After half a year, £9,000 of the issue had been sold, of which probably only some £2,000 was bought by new shareholders.<sup>208</sup> The club's debt had not become much smaller. The new chairman, Derrick H. Robins, confessed that Coventry still had a large financial burden.<sup>209</sup> Although Jimmy Hill, former chairman of the Professional Footballers' Association who had abolished the maximum wage rule, took

over the managership at the end of 1960 to create a "Sky Blue Revolution", Coventry City continued to remain a lower middling Third Division club for a while.<sup>210</sup>

Other spectator sports, such as rugby football and cricket, remained minority activities in Coventry. Nevertheless, Coventry proved one of the most profitable places for county cricket. One county championship match per season began to be allocated to Coventry in 1954. In 1955, Warwickshire played Surrey. The gate receipts were £1,700, which was higher than those for matches at the county's headquarters.<sup>211</sup> Greyhound racing in Coventry did not sustain its popularity in the 1950s, as Table L in the Appendix shows. When entertainments tax was abolished in 1957, the general manager of the Coventry Greyhound Stadium said that they had 'just been able to eke out' an existence.<sup>212</sup> While the national average of the totalisator turnover remained at the same level between 1956 and 1959, the figure for the Coventry Stadium steadily dropped.<sup>213</sup> Although the stadium survived into the next decade, it finally closed down, to become a redevelopment site for housing, in 1964.<sup>214</sup> Speedway racing seemed to retain its popularity, especially among teenagers. Dancing and visiting Coventry speedway were a popular Saturday evening combination.<sup>215</sup>

## Notes to Chapter 8

- 1 Ambitious development plans for open spaces and sports facilities in the early 1950s are described in *Civic Affairs* (September 1951), p. 3.
- 2 *Civic Affairs* (October 1954), p. 1; vol. 9, no. 2 (February 1956), p. 1.
- 3 *Civic Affairs* (June 1957), p. 1. Coventry parks facilities available at the end of the 1960s are reported in *Parks and Recreation*, vol. 34, no. 8 (1969), pp. 36-39.
- 4 CRO, CP, 'Joint Report of Director of Parks and City Architect and Planning Officer', 8 October 1957.
- 5 CRO, CP, Parks, Cemeteries and Allotments Department, 'Allocation of Football and Rugby Pitches 1958/59', 8 September 1958.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 *Civic Affairs*, (November 1953), p. 2.
- 8 At the end of the 1960s, there were 97 tennis courts, 12 bowling greens, one pitch and putt, three hockey pitches, and one sport stadium which contained a cycle track and an athletic track. In 1948, the number of these facilities was 94, 11, one, two, and one, respectively. See, *Parks and Recreation*, vol. 34, no. 8 (1969), pp. 36-39.
- 9 *Civic Affairs*, (October 1954), p. 1 and (February 1956), p. 1.
- 10 *CET*, 4 November 1953.
- 11 *CET*, 7 September 1954.
- 12 Coventry City Council, *The Development Plan* (1952), pp. 104 and 107.
- 13 CRO, CP, joint memorandum of City Treasurer and Baths Superintendent, 'New Swimming Baths', 6 September 1954; *CET*, 7 September 1954.
- 14 *CET*, 6 July 1956.
- 15 *Civic Affairs* (July, 1956), p. 1.
- 16 *Civic Affairs* (August 1956), pp. 1-2.
- 17 CRO, CP, a joint memorandum of City Treasurer and Baths Superintendent, 'New Swimming Baths', 6 September 1954. The Conservative group on the Coventry Council did not vote against the scheme but insisted that new swimming baths should be self-supporting, which was rejected at a Council meeting. See, *CET*, 18 July 1956.
- 18 *Civic Affairs* (August 1956), p. 1.
- 19 *CET*, 18 July 1956.
- 20 CRO, CP, Director of Parks' Monthly Report, June 1955.
- 21 CRO, Sec/CF/1/14937, letter, J. Stringer, secretary of Warwickshire branch, Club and Institute Union, to the Town Clerk, 2 September 1955; *CET*, 12 September 1955; Council Minutes of Parks and Allotments Committee, 12 September 1955.
- 22 *CET*, 16 September 1955.
- 23 *CET*, 5 October 1955.
- 24 *CET*, 17 September 1955.
- 25 The new central library scheme had been delayed throughout the 1950s. See, *CET*, 30 April 1959.
- 26 City of Coventry, *Municipal Handbook* (1961-1962).

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- 27 CS, 18 January 1957.
  - 28 CS, 24 January 1958.
  - 29 CET, 7 October 1960.
  - 30 CRO, CP, Libraries, Art Gallery and Museums Committee, 'Director's Report on a Travelling Library Service', 23 March 1960.
  - 31 CET, 13 February 1959.
  - 32 Kenneth Richardson supported this view. See his official history of the city, *Twentieth Century Coventry* (1972), p. 271.
  - 33 CET, 2 November 1953 and 4 August 1960.
  - 34 CS, 11 March 1960; *New Statesman and Nation*, 9 April 1960.
  - 35 *The Times*, 19 May 1959.
  - 36 *Civic Affairs* (December 1957), p. 4.
  - 37 *The Times*, 19 May 1959.
  - 38 CRO, CP, a report to the Libraries, Art Gallery and Museums Committee, 'Museum Policy', 11 December 1957.
  - 39 CET, 11 April 1961. For the first 12 months, the total number attending reached 237,547. This means that the average was about 630 an open day.
  - 40 CRO, CP, 'memorandum of the Director of Education, relating the Community Centre Service', 2 February 1952.
  - 41 See various wardens' reports to the Community Centre Sectional Committee, which can be found in CRO, CP.
  - 42 CRO, CP, 'memorandum of the Director of Education, relating the Community Centre Service', 2 February 1952; 'Summary of Wardens' Report' to the Youth and Community Sectional Committee, June 1960.
  - 43 See various annual reports and warden's reports of local community centres, which can be found in CRO, CP.
  - 44 In 1954, at Canley community centre, the judo classes were organised on three days a week, and the team won the national inter club cup in which 320 clubs competed: see, CRO, CP, 'Report of the Activities of the Canley Community Centre', 26 October 1954. In 1960, the club had 80 members, while cricket and beauty culture classes had less than 20 members each: see, CRO, CP, Minutes of the 10th Annual General Meeting, Canley Community Centre, 30 June 1960.
  - 45 CRO, CP, 'secretary's report' of the Cheylesmore Community Centre [October 1954].
  - 46 CRO, CP, Holbrooks Community Association, 'Thirteenth Annual Report 1957-1958' [May 1958].
  - 47 CRO, CP, report of Director of Education to the Community Centres Sectional Committee, November 1955.
  - 48 CRO, CP, report to the Coventry Education Committee, 'Suggested Arrangements for 1955-56 Session', 27 October 1954.
  - 49 CRO, CP, report to the Community Centres Sectional Committee, 'Classes in Community Centre', November 1955.
  - 50 The figures can be found in an article about the community centre exhibition which was held as a part of the first National Community Week; CET, 6 May 1960.



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- 51 CRO, CP, Director of Education, 'memorandum on the administration of youth centres in the city', 19 march 1952.
  - 52 See columns of the revenue accounts for the Youth Service, Education Committee, in City of Coventry, *Abstract of Accounts* (various years).
  - 53 See, various reports made both by the MoE and Coventry education authority, which can be found in CRO, CP files. A famous report noted that 'fewer girls than boys' were members of youth organisations. See, Cmd. 929, *The Youth Service in England and Wales* (1960), p. 15.
  - 54 See especially, CRO, CP, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Whitemore Youth Centre, Coventry. Inspected between 29th October and 1st November, 1956'.
  - 55 Even the huts originally erected for youth centre use only were destined for school classes. See, CRO, CP, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Whitemore Youth Centre, Coventry. Inspected between 29th October and 1st November, 1956'.
  - 56 For example, see Chyelesmore Adult Education, Community and Youth Centre, *Annual Report 1957-58* and Wyken Community Association, *First Annual Report for the Year Ended March 31st 1957*. Both can be found in CRO, CP. See also CRO, CP, Community Centres Sectional Committee, 'Summary of Wardens' Report', 10 November 1959.
  - 57 According to a MoE survey, for the season 1956-57, some 35 to 38 football clubs, 20 cricket clubs, 20 table tennis clubs and 13 netball teams competed in each centrally organised youth league. CRO, CP, MoE, 'A Survey of Youth Service in the County Borough of Coventry: its Central Organisation and Centrally Arranged Activities, 2 March 1958', p. 4.
  - 58 CRO, CP, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Chyelesmore Youth Centre, Coventry inspected between 29th November and 1st November 1956'. Similar observation can be found in CRO, CP, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Whitemore Youth Centre, Coventry. Inspected between 29th October and 1st November, 1956'. See also the various figures on attendance at ballroom dancing in a report: CRO, CP, Director of Education, 'memorandum on the administration of youth centres in the city', 19 March 1952.
  - 59 CRO, CP, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Hearsall Youth Centre, Coventry. Inspected during the week beginning 11th June, 1956'; MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Stanton Bridge Youth Centre, Coventry. Inspected during the week beginning 11th June, 1956'.
  - 60 CRO, CP, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Whitemore Youth Centre, Coventry. Inspected between 29th October and 1st November, 1956'.
  - 61 CRO, CP, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Stanton Bridge Youth Centre, Coventry. Inspected during the week beginning 11th June, 1956'.

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- 62 See three reports of the inspections carried out by the  
Coventry Education Authority in 1957 and 1958, which  
can be found in CRO, CP files.
- 63 CRO, CP, 'Proposed Central Youth Club', A Report from  
the Central Care Committee, July 1953.
- 64 For the 1954-55 budget year, cuts were made in the cost  
of the youth service. See CRO, CP, 'Education  
Director's report on the establishment of a Central  
Youth Club in Coventry', March 1954.
- 65 CS, 30 May 1952 and 10 June 1960.
- 66 N. Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour  
Politics. Coventry 1945-60* (1991), pp. 96.
- 67 A White Paper (the Albemarle Report) condemned the  
post-war administration of the service in the strongest  
tone. Cmd. 929, (1960).
- 68 CS, 13 August 1954; 20 August 1954; 22 March 1957; 20  
September 1957; 29 May 1959; 17 June 1960; 16 September  
1960.
- 69 CET, 2 October 1955.
- 70 CET, 30 January 1960.
- 71 See, CET, 18 March 1955, 2 October 1955 and 30 January  
1960.
- 72 CS, 3 June 1955; 16 September 1960.
- 73 City of Coventry, *Annual Report of the Chief Constable  
1958*, p. 9. See also the reports for 1959 and 1960. In  
a 1961 report on local juvenile delinquency, it was  
stated that there were no differences in the causes of  
crimes between Coventry and elsewhere in the country.  
CRO, CP, 'Joint report by the Chief Constable,  
Principal Probation Officer and the Children's Officer  
on the Subject of Crime in the City of Coventry', n.d.  
[October, 1960].
- 74 Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction* (1991), p. 116.
- 75 CET, 3 March 1956.
- 76 CS, 16 September 1960.
- 77 CRO, CP, Community Centres Sectional Committee,  
'Summary of Wardens' Report', 1 November 1956; Pinley  
Community Association, *Annual Report for 1957/58 and  
58/59*; Community Centres Sectional Committee, 'Summary  
of Wardens' Report', 30 October 1958. See also, CRO,  
CP, Youth and Community Sectional Committee, 'Summary  
of Wardens' Report', June 1960.
- 78 CS, 18 March and 1 April 1960. See also Tiratsoo,  
*Reconstruction* (1991), p. 97.
- 79 CET, 5 July 1960. The paper commented: 'It showed that  
the party was not out-of-date in its method of  
attracting youth. It was necessary to spice traditional  
arguments with something modern.'
- 80 CS, 14 October 1960.
- 81 See, for example, Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction* (1991), p.  
94-98 and 115-19, for the alleged adverse political  
implications of the Coventry Council's lack of interest  
and understanding in the youth culture.
- 82 *Civic Affairs* (September 1957), p. 4.
- 83 CET, 3 October 1960. The annual festival was  
discontinued after 1963: Richardson, *Twentieth-Century  
Coventry* (1972), p. 343.

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- 84 CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, letter, Town Clerk to D. E. E. Gibson, City Architect, 14 November 1951.
- 85 CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, note of a discussion between representatives of the Coventry Corporation and of the Arts Council, 7 October 1949.
- 86 By the year ending March 28th 1948, there was already a net loss of £2,233, with an average 70% seating capacity: CRO, Sec/CF/1/11161, letter, Charles Landsome, Associate Drama Director of the Arts Council, to Alderman B. Stringer, 26 August 1949.
- 87 The first formal consideration of the matter by Coventry local government occurred in 1951. See, minutes of the Policy Advisory Committee, 30 October 1951.
- 88 CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, report of the Treasurer, A. H. Marshall, 'Assistance to the Arts Council Midland Theatre', 27 November 1951.
- 89 CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, memorandum, 'the arrangements with the Arts Council', 4 January 1952.
- 90 Minutes of the Policy Advisory Committee, 21 January 1952. See also, The Arts Council, *Seventh Annual Report 1951-1952*, pp. 37 and 75.
- 91 Two plans existed: for the redecoration of the Food Office and the buying of the pre-war repertory theatre, the Opera House. See, Town Clerk's Department file, CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023.
- 92 Minutes of the Policy Advisory Committee, 6 January 1953.
- 93 CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, letter, Mr. Bell, the Regional Officer of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, to C. Barratt, the Town Clerk, 6 May 1953. See also, CS, 13 March 1953.
- 94 CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, letter, Town Clerk to the Principal Regional Officer, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 12 May 1954; letter, Town Clerk to the Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 12 May 1954.
- 95 CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, letter, E. G. Hogg, the Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, to the Town Clerk, Coventry, 8 October and 6 November 1954.
- 96 CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, letter L. F. Boden to the Town Clerk, 3 October 1955.
- 97 CS, 3 December 1954.
- 98 CS, 17 December 1954.
- 99 CS, 23 November 1956; 14 February 1958.
- 100 Among local Labour Party officials, Alderman Stringer, one of the leading members of the Coventry Council who supported the civic theatre plan, was very cautious. See, CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, letter, Anthony John, Director of the Midland Theatre Company to J. L. Hodgkinson, Drama Director, the Arts Council, 9 December 1954; memorandum of interview between the Lord Mayor, Alderman Stringer and the Town Clerk with Sir William Emrys Williams, Secretary-General of the Arts Council, Mr. Mcroberts and Mr. Linklater, 7 May 1956; Town Clerk's reports to the Policy Advisory Committee, 28 December 1956 and 15 February 1957.

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- 101 *CET*, 1 and 9 April 1957.
- 102 Belgrade was the capital of Yugoslavia, and the Council chose this name because the Yugoslavian government donated timber for the interior of the theatre. In exchange, Coventry offered its aid of engineering knowledge and skill.
- 103 Of the 15 members of the council of management, 10 were local government councillors and aldermen, the Secretary was Charles Barratt, the Town Clerk, and the Treasurer was A. H. Marshall, the Treasurer of the Coventry Corporation. See, Belgrade Theatre Trust Ltd., *Annual Report and Accounts 1957-58*.
- 104 *CS*, 21 June 1957.
- 105 *CET*, 3 April 1957.
- 106 There were several civic theatres run by local authorities.
- 107 Belgrade Theatre Trust, *Annual Report and Accounts 1957-58*.
- 108 The theatre had a spacious foyer, elegant catering facilities, and a car park. Officials of the Arts Council observed of the contemporary British theatre-goer as follows: 'The British audience, with the exception of the most intellectual, in nearly every case looks upon a visit to the theatre as a 'night out'. The approach is quite different, say, in the case of the cinemas where one merely 'pops in'! However that may be, the British theatre-goer expects a large degree of comfort in seating and soft lights as well as a variety of comestibles to suit all tastes.' CRO, Sec/CF/1/14023, memorandum made by the Arts Council, 'Coventry Civic Theatre. Fundamentals of design and Occupation of a Theatre by a Professional Company', January 1953.
- 109 Belgrade Theatre Trust, *Annual Report and Accounts 1957-58*.
- 110 CRO, CP, Belgrade Theatre Trust, *Report of the Director and Secretary for the Year Ended 31st August, 1960*.
- 111 The Arts Council, *Fifteenth Annual Report 1959-60* (1960), p. 21.
- 112 The works of Arnold Wesker and of Shelagh Delaney had been first performed at the Belgrade.
- 113 There were two dramas whose subject was working-class life in the Midlands: John Wiles' *Never Had It So Good*, first performed in 1960 and David Turner's *Semi-Detached* in 1962. Both succeeded in attracting the greatest percentage of Belgrade attendances. See, CRO, CP, Belgrade Theatre Trust, *Report of the Director and Secretary for the Year Ended 31st August, 1960*; J. R. Taylor, *Anger and After* (1988), p. 197.
- 114 CRO, CP, press release, Belgrade Theatre Trust, 'First Year of the Belgrade Theatre' n.d.
- 115 Belgrade Theatre Trust, *Annual Report and Accounts 1957-58*.
- 116 CRO, CP, press release, Belgrade Theatre Trust, 'First Year of the Belgrade Theatre' n.d. This was an attempt which many other civic theatres tried to follow later.
- 117 *Ibid*.

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- 118 L. Berg, 'Shakespeare and All That Jazz', *Encore*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1962), p. 15.
  - 119 J. H. Harris, *Government Patronage of the Arts in Great Britain* (1970), p. 218.
  - 120 *CET*, 2 October and 7 December 1960, 17 November 1961 and 9 October 1962; *CS*, 9 December 1960.
  - 121 The Arts Council, *Fifteenth Annual Report 1959-60* (1960), p. 22 and the attached list, 'Pattern of Patronage: Theatre Companies Assisted by the Arts Council'.
  - 122 CRO, CP, Belgrade Theatre Trust, *Report of the Director and Secretary for the Year Ended 31st August, 1960*.
  - 123 Institute of Municipal Entertainment, *A Survey of Municipal Entertainment in England and Wales* (1964).
  - 124 *CS*, 13 April and 1 June 1956.
  - 125 *CS*, 13 April 1956.
  - 126 *CET*, 1 April 1957. In the Budget of that year, Chancellor abolished the entertainment tax on the live theatre, as well as on sport.
  - 127 *CS*, 13 April 1956.
  - 128 *CS*, 15 November 1957.
  - 129 *CET*, 31 March 1958.
  - 130 *CET*, 8 December 1960.
  - 131 *Ibid.*
  - 132 *CET*, 9 October 1962.
  - 133 City of Coventry, *1966 Review of the Development Plan: Analysis and Statement* (1967), p. 76. Many of the newly built social clubs obtained loans from the Coventry Corporation.
  - 134 City of Coventry, *Report of the Chief Constable* (various years).
  - 135 *CS*, 28 October 1955.
  - 136 *CS*, 8 April 1960.
  - 137 City of Coventry, *1966 Review* (1967), p. 76. On a most popular restaurant at the beginning of the sixties, see *CS*, 14 October 1960.
  - 138 The figures in this paragraph were mainly calculated from the following register books (Perhaps, the big five had slightly more licensed premises in early 1960s than I could trace in the register books, which did not always contain detailed information): CRO, MG/REG/1/5-6, 'Registers of Intoxicating Liquor Licences', vols. 1 and 2 (1942-56) ; City of Coventry, 'Register of Licences', vols. 1 and 2 (1956-), at the Licensing Office, Coventry Magistrate Court. I also consulted J. Asheby, *The Character of Coventry: A Reflection on Well Known "Characters" and a History of the City's Inns and Taverns* (Coventry, 1984).
  - 139 See, *The Economist*, 3 January 1959, p. 72; 2 January 1960, p. 66; and 16 January 1960, p. 249.
  - 140 H. E. Browning and A. A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and Cinema-Going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A (General)*, part 2, vol. 117, pp. 133-170; 'Cinema-Going in London and the Provinces', *Board of Trade Journal*, 19 November 1955, pp. 1106-12. Figures in the following paragraphs are based on the these two statistical studies.

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- 141 However, this figure of 24 in 1954 was estimated on the average figure for the populations in 1950 and 1951, that is 258,000. In order to make the estimates more precise, if we re-calculate the figures based on the actual 1954 population figure (267,900), the cinema-going of the local population for 1954 was on average 23 times per year.
- 142 Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas and Cinema-Going', pp. 133-170; 'Cinema-Going in London and the Provinces', *Board of Trade Journal*, 19 November 1955, pp. 1106-12.
- 143 *CET*, 27 February 1954. The Plaza was at Spon End, the Roxy at Foleshill Road, the Rivoli at Longford Road. The Plaza, which was owned by Philpot Brothers, was later managed by the Orr Circuit. Mr. W. H. Bassett-Green, who donated the Godiva statue in the city centre had been the owner of the Roxy and the Rivoli, and he announced that these would be run by himself. The Rivoli changed its name to Dovedale, and the Roxy to Redesdale.
- 144 *CET*, 14 May 1959.
- 145 *CET*, 27 February 1954.
- 146 *CET*, 20 October 1956.
- 147 *CET*, 31 May 1956. The cinema was The Crown Cinema at Far Gosford Street. The Crown Theatre Co. Ltd. who owned another local suburban cinema, had to sell the Prince of Wales for as little as £5,000 at a local auction, despite a £6,000 investment for refurbishment in 1951.
- 148 G. Robottom, 'A Brief History of the Cinemas of Coventry' (unpublished essay, 1982).
- 149 *CET*, 15 October 1956 and 20 July 1957; *CS*, 11 October 1957. The ballroom, The Majestic Ballroom, remained owned and run by The Rank Organisation.
- 150 *CET*, 20 October 1956.
- 151 *CET*, 21 July 1955.
- 152 *CET*, 2 August and 20 October 1956.
- 153 *CET*, 14 June 1957.
- 154 *CET*, 12 June 1958.
- 155 *CET*, 14 May 1959.
- 156 *CET*, 5 November 1960.
- 157 See the statement by a managing director of an independent circuit, Mr. H. C. Orr, in *CS*, 3 January 1958.
- 158 *CET*, 10 June 1960. On the introduction of wrestling, the manager said: 'We have decided to introduce wrestling because of declining attendance in cinemas generally and also because the sport is becoming increasingly popular'. See, *CET*, 22 December 1959.
- 159 The Opera House was completely out of date by 1958. It had a rear projection system, which only ten other cinemas in the country had. Thus, the cinema could not show CinemaScope films properly, not to say Vistavision. See, *CET*, 23 October 1958.
- 160 Robottom, 'A Brief History' (1982).
- 161 *Ibid.*
- 162 *CS*, 22 August 1958.
- 163 *CS*, 28 October 1955.

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- 164 CS, 3 January 1958.
  - 165 CET, 10 June 1960.
  - 166 City of Coventry, *An Introduction to Coventry* [1958], p. 33; City of Coventry, *1966 Review* (1967), p. 80.
  - 167 CS, 30 January 1959.
  - 168 CS, 28 October 1955. The Rialto Casino ballroom used to be attached to the Rialto Cinema before the war. See, CS, 1 June 1956. A suburban dancing hall, the Matrix at Fletchamsted Highway, was owned by TI Matrix Machine Tool and was used as a works canteen during the day-time. See, CET, 12 August 1981.
  - 169 See the section 'Dancing and Dramatic Instructions' in *Classified Telephone Directory, Trades and Professions, Coventry Area* (April 1948) and (January 1952).
  - 170 The Mecca Ltd. was a big London company, which specialised in both dancing and catering. The company was also famous for its 'Miss World' promotion. On the company's history, see, CS, 26 August 1960.
  - 171 CET, 30 July 1960. See also, CS, 19 July 1957 and 21 August 1959; CET, 31 October 1958.
  - 172 CET, 26 August 1960.
  - 173 CET, 9 December 1960.
  - 174 CET, 12 June 1958. The leader of the Studios was Víctor Silvester, 'the king' of ballroom dancing at the time.
  - 175 *Classified Telephone Directory, Trades and Professions, Coventry Area* (October 1956) and (May 1960).
  - 176 The manager of the Rialto Casino told a local newspaper: 'The city just couldn't support more than one full-scale dance on a weekday evening': CS, 28 October 1955. On the patronage of local dancing studios in the early 1950s, see, CS, 28 August 1953.
  - 177 CET, 26 August 1960.
  - 178 CS, 14 October 1960. See also the photographs of a long queue waiting to enter a lunch time dance session: CS, 12 November 1960.
  - 179 CS, 28 October 1955. By that date, he had been the manager of the ballroom for 14 years.
  - 180 CET, 3 October 1957.
  - 181 CET, 26 August 1960.
  - 182 CET, 6 October 1960.
  - 183 CET, 25 January 1962. Two other days were for bingo, and one of the four dancing nights was a record session.
  - 184 CET, 25 January 1962.
  - 185 CET, 14 March 1952 and 7 March 1953.
  - 186 Ibid.
  - 187 Ibid.
  - 188 Harry Storer, the manager, replaced Ted Roberts with Tommy Briggs in December 1950. This measure seriously damaged the team. It is claimed that Roberts had been 'idolised' by his team mates, and there is 'a strong suspicion' that as a result Briggs was 'literally frozen out'. See, R. Dean, *Coventry City: A Complete Record 1883-1991* (1991), pp. 29-30 and 133.
  - 189 See the speech made by Miss Elaine Burton, MP for Coventry South, in *HC Debs*, vol. 515, col. 2109, 20 May 1953.

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- 190 D. Henderson, *The Sky Blues: The Story of Coventry City F.C.* (1968), p. 34.
- 185 *CET*, 7 April 1954.
- 192 *CET*, 14 May 1954. The new chairman was Mr. W. Earl Shanks, managing director of E. O. Shanks and Sons Ltd. and a Director of other companies. One of new directors was Mr. R. B. Cole, who was a former director and general manager of Humber-Hillman, and later, a deputy managing director of Daimler Ltd. Another new director was Mr. Derrick H. Robins, who was a Director of Edgehill Finance Company and a managing director of Portable Concrete Buildings Ltd., Banbury. He was at that time best known as the wicket-keeper of the Coventry and North Warwickshire Cricket Club. The other three directors were Mr. W. W. Brandish, Mr. J. R. Mead and Mr. F. Stringer, all of whom were re-elected. Mr. J. R. Mead was a Coventry accountant and chairman of the taxation committee of the Engineering Industries' Association. Mr. Stringer had been a successful chairman of the club in the 1930s as well as the licensee of the city's oldest pub, the Stag and Pheasant, for 42 years. See, *CET*, 24 April 1954, 10 April 1957 and 10 April 1959.
- 193 This was reported at an annual dinner of the Rootes Athletic Football Club, a local amateur factory club; *CET*, 15 May 1954.
- 194 N. Foulger, *Coventry: The Complete History of the Club* (Norwich, 1979), p. 33; *CET*, 19 June 1956; Henderson, *The Sky Blues* (1968), p. 37.
- 195 G. Raynor, *Football Ambassador at Large* (1960), p. 89. On another occasion, the chairman publicly criticised the City players in the club programme: *CET*, 14 January 1957.
- 196 Raynor, *Football Ambassador* (1960), p. 90.
- 197 *CET*, 17 August 1957.
- 198 *CET*, 4 March 1957.
- 199 *CET*, 13 March 1957.
- 200 *CET*, 16 May 1957; Dean, *Coventry City* (1991), p. 32.
- 201 *CET*, 2 April, 16 April and 14 May 1957. The association claimed that it had some 3,000 of the 15,053 shares in total, which were worth £3,763. Under the Company's Act of 1948, 10 per cent shareholders' support was needed to hold a general meeting. See also, *CET*, 17 August 1957.
- 202 *CET*, 16 May 1957; Foulger, *Coventry* (Norwich, 1979), p. 35.
- 203 *CET*, 12 April 1957; Dean, *Coventry City* (1991), p. 47.
- 204 *CET*, 15 April 1958.
- 205 *CET*, 20 September 1958.
- 206 *CET*, 25 September 1958.
- 207 *CET*, 23 September 1959.
- 208 The club's financial director told a local newspaper that existing shareholders would buy some £7,000. *CET*, 20 April and 17 August 1960.
- 209 *CET*, 18 October 1960; Foulger, *Coventry* (Norwich, 1979), p. 39.



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- 210 A new board elected in October 1960 consisted of: Derrick Robins, chairman and managing director of Portable Concrete Building Ltd., Banbury; Walter Brandish, retiring chairman of the City F.C.; J. R. Mead; Dr. P. Coghill, medical officer to the club; R. B. Cole; G. H. Smart, managing director of Simpson and Smart Ltd., a subsidiary of the Rubery Owen organisation; and J. W. Stevenson, contracts manager of Electrical Installations Ltd., Coventry. See, *CET*, 10 April 1959 and 18 October 1960.
- 211 *CET*, 13 August 1955.
- 212 *CET*, 10 April 1957. The stadium was in Lythalls Lane, Foleshill.
- 213 *HC Debs*, vol. 599, col. 546, 5 February 1959.
- 214 An Evening Telegraph Special Publication, *Sporting Yesterday* (2 December 1991), p. 9.
- 215 *CS*, 29 May 1959.

## Chapter 9: Municipal and Commercial Provision in Leisure, Bolton, 1950s

During the course of the later 1940s, Bolton gradually re-established and modernised its municipal recreational and entertainment facilities. Furthermore, the authority gradually intervened in the world of commercial leisure, though many had once believed it should not trespass there. In the 1950s, many aspects of commercial leisure in the locality changed, whilst the local authority extended its role as a provider of culture and entertainments. In this chapter on 1950s Bolton, we will look first at the roles of local government: how the availability of these municipal leisure facilities changed; what roles the Town Council played in enriching the local leisure world; and how local people reacted to them. Secondly, attention will be given to the changing and constant aspects of popular commercial leisure, such as cinemas, dancing, and public houses.

### 1. Municipal Provision

#### Parks, reservoirs and allotments

The general standard of municipal parks gradually improved, so that, by the end of 1952, the Parks Committee proposed to charge for the use of certain football, hockey and cricket pitches. The Town Council agreed that charges could be made for those pitches with dressing rooms, though few of these had either showers or electricity supply.<sup>1</sup> In 1952, Butlin Holiday Camps presented £3,000 for the erection of first-rate dressing accommodation and pavilions at a local playing

field where many football pitches existed.<sup>2</sup> However, even in the late 1950s, some changing accommodation remained in very poor condition. At a changing room in Moss Bank Park, a water pipe was laid on, but there was no tap and no lighting. Some 44 players and players of the Bolton Federation (associational football) had to change in just 15 square feet. The room was called the "Black Hall of Moss Bank Park". The Chairman of the Bolton Federation told a local newspaper: 'We have been trying for years to get something done, but no matter what party is in power in Bolton there is never any money to spare to put right these disgraceful conditions.'<sup>3</sup> The Parks Committee did try, but the Finance Committee would not allocate a budget without a loan sanction from the central Government, which was very difficult to obtain. Nevertheless, on one occasion, the Parks Department did actually provide cold water and wash basins at Leverhulme Park after a protest deputation,<sup>4</sup> and in 1958 improvement work on the "Black Hall of Moss Bank Park" started.<sup>5</sup>

By the late fifties, the local authority managed 23 bowling greens, 59 tennis courts, 37 football pitches, 5 hockey pitches, 4 permanent cricket squares, two putting greens, two pitch and put courses and a full golf course.<sup>6</sup> How far did local people make use of these facilities? Tom Harrisson, who revisited Bolton in 1960, thought that none of the participatory sports had 'significantly declined since 1937'.<sup>7</sup> However, when we look at the departmental statistics, it is difficult to deny that the usage of some municipal sports facilities in Bolton was on the decline. As

Table N in the Appendix shows, all the peaks in civic usage of bowling, tennis and golf facilities were between 1947 and 1954. Compared with the pre-war situation, Tom Harrisson suggested that the growth of golf was restricted because it was still expensive to play even at the end of the 1950s, whilst the relative increasing popularity of tennis could be explained in terms of the cheaper fee and the improvements made in the municipal tennis courts.<sup>8</sup> Harrisson also noted that, except for association football, no participatory sport was exclusively masculine in 1960.<sup>9</sup>

There were several other sports activities which took place in the municipal parks. The miniature golf course constantly attracted more than 10,000 players every year,<sup>10</sup> though the average number of users of the putting green declined from more than 10,000 a year in the mid-1950s to about 4,000 in the early 1960s.<sup>11</sup> In the 1950s, the Parks Department renovated or added a few other amenities. In 1953, an open-air theatre at Moss Bank Park was built in time for the Coronation, supported by a donation from a local manufacturer of chemicals who was also the president of a leading amateur dramatic group, the Bolton Little Theatre.<sup>12</sup> In 1959, the Department also renovated the running track at Leverhulme Park, making it wider and longer.<sup>13</sup>

Public parks remained a focal point for people's leisure in the locality. Every summer, band performances and other outdoor shows occurred in the main parks. There was a Family Holiday Week every year from 1952, in which children's games and sports were organised.<sup>14</sup> In addition,

more people must have spent a sunny day or evening at the various municipal parks, without participating in any special activities.

Another form of municipal provision of leisure gradually gained popularity in the locality in the 1950s. Bolton Corporation had several reservoirs to aid water consumption, most of which were small. Before the Second World War, the Corporation permitted few sporting activities on its waterworks and gathering grounds, just grouse shooting over the moors, and fishing in the Wayoh and Rumworth reservoirs.<sup>15</sup> This arrangement was not changed until 1953, when the Bolton Sailing Club was allowed for the first time to make use of a reservoir at Belmont.<sup>16</sup> A Mass-Observation survey in 1960 confirmed this new phenomenon, reporting that skiffs were 'crowding the surrounding moorland reservoirs'.<sup>17</sup> The survey also reported that fishing was booming in Bolton.<sup>18</sup> Fishing's popularity was well recognised by the local authority. The Bolton Town Council made a decision in 1959 to open the Rumworth reservoir for ordinary anglers.<sup>19</sup> Previously, the Royal Angling Society and the Wayoh Angling Society had enjoyed exclusive fishing rights on this water. Both societies had a fixed membership of about 60, and independent anglers complained that each was a "closed shop". There was a party division on the issue. The Water Works Committee Chairman, Alderman Lowe, a Labour member, complained: 'I have had my name down for membership of the Wayoh Angling Society for 15 years - still I am not a member'.<sup>20</sup> Another Labour Councillor felt that the local angling societies had 'too

much control of the fishing rights in the reservoirs'. On the other hand, Conservative Councillors opposed the ending of the traditional exclusive rights. The Wayoh Angling Society admitted that there were 34 people on its waiting list, but claimed that its members were doctors, directors, artisans and labourers, so that the society could hardly be accused of being a "closed shop" at all.<sup>21</sup> Although it was not until the 1960s that the national demands for water recreation were really recognised,<sup>22</sup> the popularity of angling and sailing was quite well developed in 1950s' Bolton.<sup>23</sup>

The total number of allotment plots in Bolton decreased in the 1950s. In the first half of the decade, Bolton Corporation retained more than 1,200 allotment plots, compared to 1,260 in the Second World War.<sup>24</sup> However, as time went on, several allotment sites had to be given up, often becoming new housing estates.<sup>25</sup> In 1960, the number of municipal allotment sites had decreased to 31, compared to 36 in 1955.<sup>26</sup> It is also observable that there was a growing lack of interest in allotments. Of the 1,119 plots in 1960, 168 were vacant and more than another 200 were not cultivated. Although the annual show of the Bolton Allotment Council remained popular, involving 600 entries in 60 classes, a declining interest in allotments, especially from the late 1950s, cannot be denied.

### Libraries, museums and art gallery

Because national economic difficulties continued, and tax and rates increased, demands for economy in local public

services was a constant goal. As described in Chapter 6, library services were regarded by both parties as one of the primary targets whose costs should be cut.<sup>27</sup> Alderman Vickers, a leading Labour member, demanded reductions in expenditure focused on the baths, the golf course, and the library service.<sup>28</sup> Then, in 1952, the Finance Committee of Bolton Corporation reviewed the various services provided by the Town Council. The Finance Special Sub-Committee was quite critical of the public library service, finding that the total number of books issued for the year 1950-51 was considerably smaller than for the year 1939-40. Bolton had more branch libraries than the majority of towns of a similar size, but the number of the public using that branch libraries was small.<sup>29</sup> The committee made several recommendations: the branch libraries should not open in the mornings; all libraries should close earlier on Saturday evenings; to achieve some economies, staffing arrangements should be reconsidered; and the exclusive usage of branch library buildings for library services should be discontinued.<sup>30</sup> The Finance Sub-Committee also tried to cut expenditure on the museum department. It recommended that the Chadwick Museum, which had been temporarily closed since the war, should be closed permanently.<sup>31</sup> Alderman Tong, chairman of the Finance Committee and leader of the Conservative majority on the Council, repeatedly stated that Bolton did not need three museums.<sup>32</sup> These recommendations were signed by both prominent Tory and Labour members.

Thus, after the Labour group re-gained control of the Council in May 1952, things did not change. The new Mayor,

Alderman Vickers, urged the Libraries Committee to implement earlier closing. Councillor Lucas (Labour), now the chairman of the Libraries Committee and one of the few advocates of municipal services in the cultural sphere, made two points in protest.<sup>33</sup> Firstly, the decline in the number of both reference and lending issues at the local libraries had been reversed in the year 1951-52, for the first time in the post-war period.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, he reminded the critics that Bolton library services had a burden of high loan charges, which few other public libraries had to shoulder. Then he pointed out that the civic centre, where the central library was accommodated, had not been the choice of the Libraries Committee. If it had been allowed to choose, he said, the committee would have opted for a more functional and cheaper building: the central library was attractive architecturally, but not ideal. Eventually, the Libraries Committee accepted that all the libraries in the locality should close at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday evenings, which meant the dismissal of three assistant staff.<sup>35</sup> However, it rejected morning closure of branch libraries, as well as the permanent shutting of the Chadwick Museum,<sup>36</sup> judgements which were accepted by the Town Council.<sup>37</sup>

Although the figure for total issues of books in public libraries increased in 1951-52, it soon began to decline again, though with fluctuations. As the figures in Table G in the Appendix show, the home lending issues never again reached the level of the pre-war financial year, 1938-39. Councillor Dr. Monks, chairman of the Libraries Committee, said in 1955 that local people read less than they had done.



The decline in lending issues was mainly caused by a drop in prose fiction borrowing as in the late forties. Monks explained that the public watched serious features and plays on television and then borrowed books on them, so that there was no time for light reading.<sup>38</sup> In 1956, again commenting on a further drop in library borrowing, Monks said that light reading was affected by week-end attractions as well as television.<sup>39</sup> Mr. Hammer, the chief librarian, thought that the introduction of commercial television broadcasting had caused a further sharp drop in lending over 1956-57: with only one channel, people had been more selective, but now they chose between two channels, not between television and light entertainment books.<sup>40</sup>

However, the Libraries Committee and its departmental staff were relieved to find that non-fiction issues, especially technical and educational titles, gradually increased in the latter half of the 1950s.<sup>41</sup> Tom Dunne, a senior librarian in the later period, suggested this happened because the 'embourgeoisement' of Bolton library users accelerated in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as elsewhere in Britain.<sup>42</sup> However, issues of prose fiction also began to increase from 1957-58. As a result of this, local newspapers began to wonder if television would ultimately prove a 'stimulus, not hindrance, to reading',<sup>43</sup> By the summer of 1959, the upward trend in the number of public library books issued was clear. One out of three local residents were registered at the libraries. The number of books which the local public libraries issued increased by 111,000 over the previous year, reaching over 1.5 million

in total.<sup>44</sup> This meant that nearly 10 books were borrowed by every Boltonian.

As support from both the local authority and the local people was stagnating in many ways, so was the quality of the library services. Almost no improvements were made to the library system in the post-war period. Tom Dunne judged that the Bolton public libraries, which had been regarded at one time very highly in a national perspective, had declined in the post-war period. He blamed 'inward-looking' staff as well as external elements such as restricted expenditure.<sup>45</sup> Few changes in the layout of the libraries were instituted to suit modern fashion.<sup>46</sup> Despite the high gross expenditure for the libraries service as a whole, the level of expenditure on books was very low, near the bottom of a league table of Lancashire towns with populations of over 40,000.<sup>47</sup> The proportion of qualified librarians, 28 per cent of all staff, was also smaller than that recommended in the Roberts Report of 1960.<sup>48</sup>

The museums service, another Libraries Committee responsibility, could not be ambitious at all in the 1950s. Although the Libraries Committee had originally hoped that the temporarily closed Chadwick Museum should open as soon as possible, as we have seen,<sup>49</sup> by the middle of the 1950s, it had adopted an opposite option. In 1955, the Libraries, Museums and Art Gallery Committee<sup>50</sup> resolved, by five votes to four, that the committee would seek advice from the Minister of Education with a view to disposing of the

building. This decision was made after the committee found the cost of repairing and maintaining the museum too high.<sup>51</sup>

Councillor Lucas, a Labour committee member, strongly opposed the idea, arguing that there was dry rot in the committee, as well as in the museum.<sup>52</sup> The Minister of Education replied that he thought the estimated £7,500 cost of restoring the museum properly too expensive. He wrote that any course other than demolishing it would be 'uneconomical and impracticable', which was the final decision.<sup>53</sup> The annual figures for visitors to the museums and art galleries (Table O in the Appendix) suggest that in the second half of the fifties they became less and less popular.

### The service of youth

As noted in Chapter 6, Bolton had a residential youth training centre.<sup>54</sup> In 1957, H. M. Inspectors reported on the centre to the MoE, praising it highly.<sup>55</sup> However, between the late 1940s and early 1950s, the LEA's direct involvement in the youth service was reduced dramatically. In the 1940s, there were 10 youth institutes, all directly maintained by the LEA. By 1954, the number had been reduced to four. All the remaining youth institutes were accommodated at local schools, and opened two or three nights a week. Their memberships varied, and fluctuated every year. At the Sunning Hill Institute, situated one and a half miles away from the town centre, about 90 boys and girls enrolled in 1953. Only about 10 people attended the classes in physiology, first aid and physical training. The

arts and craft and the weaving and embroidery classes also attracted about 10 young people each. Between 30 and 48 turned up once a week, when the institute opened for general leisure activities.<sup>56</sup>

Her Majesty's Inspectors reported that this decline had been caused partly because of the deliberate policy of the LEA.<sup>57</sup> Firstly, in 1950, the vocational and examination classes for boys, which had previously been held in the youth institutes, became centrally organised at a school in the town centre. In 1953, a similar centre was opened for girls. Thus, the youth institutes were left with classes and activities of a more recreational nature. Later, the further separation of the evenings for classes from those for the general activities took place. This latter measure caused a further drop in membership, because many remaining members did not want to attend even a recreational class.<sup>58</sup>

The Inspectors were rather critical of this policy of the LEA. They pointed out that there were local areas which were not covered by the voluntary organisations. They also suggested that even where a voluntary organisation existed, there were still young persons who did not belong to the organisation. For example, at the Brownlow Fold youth institute, situated in a very crowded area of small houses and mills, there were many young people who would not attend the classes formally, but just wandered in when the classes were held. They dropped in to meet their friends and talk to the wardens. The Inspectors noted: 'it is obvious that they have nowhere else to go and look to the institute as a place where they can find some measure of comfort'.<sup>59</sup>

The Inspectors' reports showed that the Bolton youth service policy overlooked the changing nature of needs among the young. The lack of gathering places, without specific activities or lessons, was regarded as a serious problem. As an example, they pointed to the Folds Road youth institute, the only institute whose three evenings a week were all for general leisure activities. The Inspectors paid several visits to the institute, which served the poor area near the town centre, and found each time that 'a number of young people were sitting and talking as quietly as possible in the midst of the general bustle'.<sup>60</sup> The Inspectors mentioned the young persons who were most neglected by the local youth service in their concluding remarks:

In general, they are boys and girls who are known to come from small, or crowded, or otherwise unattractive homes, who have neither the ability nor the mental energy after a day's work to follow a serious course of study, who for various reasons do not wish to join a voluntary club, and who will either roam the streets or congregate in places less desirable for young people... From what they have seen and heard H. M. Inspectors are of the opinion that there are a number of young people who need nothing more in the evenings than bright, warm premises where they may meet (and not necessarily in classes), talk quietly to their friends, or play games together...<sup>61</sup>

The belief of the Bolton LEA was that the voluntary organisations were more suitable providers of purely recreational activities. Certainly, there were many voluntary organisations in Bolton. In terms of membership, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides were the biggest. Each claimed nearly 2,000 members.<sup>62</sup> The Local Authority estimated that, in addition, between 2,500 and 3,000 boys

and girls belonged to youth clubs, many of which were linked to the churches or Sunday schools.<sup>63</sup> In 1959-60, total nominal membership claimed by those youth organisations which applied for assistance to the Local Education Authority, reached 3,130, of which about 1,700 were junior members under the age of 15, and about 1,450 were senior members of 15 years old and over.<sup>64</sup> However, actual attendances were much lower. For example, one of the largest youth clubs in the locality, the Bolton Recreation Club, claimed 274 senior members, but on average just 80 turned up per night.<sup>65</sup> Most smaller clubs had memberships of between 20 and 50. And most importantly, there were no voluntary organisations which provided what ordinary young persons really needed, such as a club of the 'youth cafe' type where young persons could spend an evening with a refreshment and chat with friends.<sup>66</sup>

The grants made to those voluntary youth organisations by the Local Education Authority totalled £2,215 to 11 organisations in 1959-60.<sup>67</sup> Among those given aid, the Bolton Lads' Club, the Bolton Recreation Club, the Bolton Young Men's Christian Association, and the Bolton Catholic Boys Club received the largest amounts. These four organisations took more than 86 per cent of the total grants made to the youth organisations in 1959-60.<sup>68</sup> The Education Authority also loaned equipment to voluntary organisations in the locality. Facilities for voluntary organisations were generally poor.<sup>69</sup> In the 1950s, the Bolton Lads' Club was one of few which were able to expand and renovate its accommodation, and it was the only club which had its own

playing field.<sup>70</sup> A local newspaper reported that 'nearly every club in the town' lacked adequate financial support in improving their facilities.<sup>71</sup>

We probably should regard the events provided by the Entertainments Committee, such as the "Winter Gardens" and civic dances, as a part of the Bolton youth service, since these were heavily patronised by local teenagers. In this perspective, the shortcomings in the LEA's provision and attitudes toward 'modern' young people in the locality appear less unsatisfactory. The "Winter Gardens" and civic dances can be seen as spaces for young persons to meet together, without any 'youth leaders' telling them what to do. In pre-war periods, the local Council would never have provided such opportunities.

Nevertheless, the general attitude of the Town Council towards young people was not always positive. Labour, Conservatives and Liberal alike all accepted that the civic dances and the "Winter Gardens" were primarily a way of preventing youth delinquency, by keeping young people off the streets. The unsympathetic attitudes of local politicians was further demonstrated when a controversial film, *Rock Around the Clock*, was banned in the locality.<sup>72</sup> The Watch Committee decided not to allow the screening of the film, and the Town Council supported the Watch Committee's decision by 38 votes to 26.<sup>73</sup> The majority of the Town Council opted for safety first.

In 1959, a local newspaper reported that crimes committed by young teenagers had increased 'alarmingly' since 1956. The number of offenders under the age of

fourteen had increased from 54 in 1956 to 162 in 1958.<sup>74</sup> The corresponding figure for offenders between fourteen and sixteen years old had also increased, from 75 to 112. The police estimated that one-third of burglaries in the locality were done by young persons. A continuing rise in joy riding was observed as well.<sup>75</sup> In 1959, it was reported that local cinema managers had been battling against the "Teddy Boys" for some time. Some of the latter had been banned from the cinemas. The manager of the Capitol, a big luxurious town centre cinema, had lifted the ban, but on the very first night after, 15 seats were ripped out.<sup>76</sup>

Certainly, 'modern' young people were becoming increasingly perceived as a distinctive and visible group by the early 1950s. In 1952, Mr. P. A. Merigold, an eighteen years old 'average teenager', wrote to a local newspaper that the contemporary moral decline among young people was occurring because of the decline in church attendance and the influx of Hollywood films.<sup>77</sup> A reply from another 'teenager' appeared two days later:

He is wrong in regarding himself as an average modern teenager. I say modern average teenagers are the "hoodlums" (and I am one of them) of whom Mr. Merigold has a very low opinion. The fact that we wear fancy clothes and have bop-crops, etc., does not entitle us to live in eternal bliss, and it does not mean we are not ready to accept the chances of improving our status offered by the modern world...<sup>78</sup>

There are certainly many observations which suggest that these teenagers, though wearing distinctive fashions, were by no means delinquent. A newspaper reporter who visited a rock and roll session at the local Palais de Danse in 1957



was struck by 'the extreme orderliness and good behaviour' of the young patrons.<sup>79</sup> The reporter was also impressed by a difference between these young people and those of the pre-war period. The clothes of the boys and girls were so smart that he could not say either whether they had come straight from work, or what kind of jobs they did.

In 1956, a local Youth Employment Officer and other youth workers in voluntary organisations insisted that there were no Teddy Boys in the locality who, 'by definition', were 'anti-social and vicious'.<sup>80</sup> The Officer pointed out:

We have boys dressed in Edwardian suits, with drapes and drain-pipe trousers. But they are not Teddy Boys as the term should be understood... the Teddy Boys suit we see today is no different from Oxford bags I wore 30 years ago, is it? And there is no more hooliganism today than there was 50 years ago. Everyone can be assured ... that there are no Teddy Boys in Bolton.<sup>81</sup>

The 'modern' local young persons certainly became clothes' conscious,<sup>82</sup> but they were not necessarily delinquent. Despite the cinema manager's complaint, overall, delinquent Teddy Boys seemed very much in the minority. Tom Harrisson confirmed this on his return visit:

All who visited Worktown [Bolton] in 1960 were surprised to find few - on some log-books, no [sic] - teddy boys and spivvy types. Most evenings moving about the town, you'd be unlikely to see three. Statistically they are under 0.1%... They are not a topic of comment.<sup>83</sup>

It was reported with very little fuss in 1960 that the Teddy Boy era was over in Bolton, being replaced by the 'continental style', built around the box style Italian coat.<sup>84</sup>

### Municipal entertainments

Bolton Corporation supported a few big civic celebrations in the early 1950s: it organised the local Festival of Britain in 1951 and the Coronation festivals in 1953. The final local event for the Festival of Britain was a community drama featuring 260 Boltonians, many of whom had had no experience of theatre: "Bolton Pride", a story of the cotton town, was performed at the Theatre Royal.<sup>85</sup> On the occasion of Coronation, about £10,000 was spent on the various events.<sup>86</sup> Except for these special occasions, the main events featured by the Corporation were very much the same as those in the 1940s, although the Entertainments Committee also tried a few experiments as time went on.

The "Winter Gardens" event on Sunday evenings maintained its popularity in the first half of the 1950s. In 1951, a local newspaper reported that many people could not get into the Albert Hall where the "Winter Gardens" was held.<sup>87</sup> The average attendance in the first half of the 1950s often exceeded a thousand.<sup>88</sup> The character of the "Winter Gardens", however, was perceived to have changed. One of the main original purposes of the event was to provide an informal Sunday evening with pleasant settings for local young people.<sup>89</sup> It was reportedly intended that 'people should talk, laugh, wander about and have refreshments to a background of music'.<sup>90</sup> Entertainers, such as bands and singers, were warned that this would be so. However, high attendances led to an increase in the number of chairs, which tended to destroy the original

informal atmosphere. The local newspapers felt that the event had become a formal Sunday concert and had lost its appeal for the young.<sup>91</sup>

However, local youth did not simply stop going to the "Winter Gardens". In fact, it remained popular. In early 1956, the Town Hall steward wrote to the Town Clerk about his difficulty in keeping order at the events. The steward observed that the average age of those attending the event was becoming lower, with more 15-20 year olds appearing in the past two or three years.

Three or four hundreds of the above age group [15-20 years old], and sometimes more, came into the building, not [to] listen to the concert but to parade up and down the corridors, or stand in groups talking. The only time that they go into the hall is when the organ is playing and community singing takes place. The utmost difficulty is then experienced in getting them seated, as they prefer to stand in the doorways of the hall.<sup>92</sup>

The steward stated that by that time he had had to increase the number of patrolling staff to five. Subsequently, the Entertainments Sub-Committee held a meeting with the steward to discuss the question.<sup>93</sup> The steward was asked by the committee members to describe the rowdy elements in more detail. He briefly replied:

People chasing each other on [sic] the corridor, shouting, whistling, putting lights on and off, chasing girls. The young people are interfering with the enjoyments of the older people.<sup>94</sup>

He also suggested that the reduction in the admission fee after eight o'clock attracted more rowdy young persons. Some Committee members were, however, sceptical about the extent

and the seriousness of the rowdyism. After Councillor Wood, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, suggested that not all young people were causing trouble, the steward had to say that it was 'only 10 or 15 per cent' of them who were a nuisance. Councillor Marshall said that there were also undesirable elements amongst the older people.<sup>95</sup> Councillor Young and Alderman Booth agreed that the original idea of the "Winter Gardens" anyway was not to make it a formal Sunday concert.<sup>96</sup>

A local newspaper suggested that reconciliation was not possible between young and old generations. The newspaper was more sympathetic to the local young people than to the senior members in the community, though it was so from a rather negative, social control point of view.<sup>97</sup> Later, the chief reporter of the *Bolton Evening News* wrote: 'If the young people are discouraged from attending, where do they go? Back to the "monkey parade"? Is it not better that they should be in the Town Hall where they can at least be supervised.'<sup>98</sup>

Young patrons themselves were not offered an opportunity to express their own opinions. The final statement of the Entertainments Sub-Committee had a rather stern tone. In an open letter addressed to local teenagers, the committee tried to show sympathy to young people, but concluded with a strong warning: 'It is suggested that a few of you be "whizzed out" ... We hope that won't be necessary. But remember, YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!'<sup>99</sup>

The Sub-Committee also agreed to provide a soft drinks bar, which might, the committee members agreed, reduce

rowdyism.<sup>100</sup> This policy was implemented after the local newspaper reported that there were no complaints about the civic dances and "Winter Gardens" held at a second venue, the Assembly Hall, where refreshments were served.<sup>101</sup>

Although a few world-famous bands had been hired alongside the local dance bands,<sup>102</sup> the committee ventured to stage a skiffle band performance in December 1956 for the first time, and repeated this the following year.<sup>103</sup> The question of young people's conduct was finally dropped, without any fuss, in April 1957.<sup>104</sup> At the end of that year, a local newspaper reported, with a photograph, that about 75 per cent of the audiences were teenagers.<sup>105</sup>

Although the "Winter Gardens" was quite popular in the first half of the 1950s, the events did not make much money. In the year ended March 1951, for example, there was a deficit of about £170.<sup>106</sup> For the season 1955-56, the deficit at each event was between £8 and £48.<sup>107</sup> A definite decline in the events' popularity became visible in the late 1950s. Table P in the Appendix shows the marked drop in attendances after season 1955-56.

Of other popular events, civic dances also continued to be organised throughout the 1950s. For season 1950-51, the average attendance for a total of 20 civic dances was only 528, but there was a profit of more than £500.<sup>108</sup> In October 1952, Mr A. Bryan West, the Director of Entertainments, reported that six of the past eight civic dances were 'house full'.<sup>109</sup> Up to the 1956-57 season, as Table Q in the Appendix shows, average attendances were always near to full capacity, which was 700. Moreover, the

civic dances were the only municipally organised event which never failed to make a profit.<sup>110</sup> Even after the entry charge to the dances was increased to 4s. in 1956, it was reported that about 150 people had to be turned away because of full capacity.<sup>111</sup>

What kind of people were the main patrons of the civic dances? In 1956, Alderman Vickers thought that they were usually highly respectable.<sup>112</sup> Councillor Lucas shared this enthusiasm and supported a proposal to increase the admission fee from 3s. 6d. to 4s., which was the amount charged by commercial dance halls in the city centre, saying that, if the fee was not raised, there was a possibility of an influx of teenagers who would lower the standard of the civic dances. Councillor Chamberlain agreed stating that there had already been a few of the 'undesirable element' present on occasions.<sup>113</sup> Councillor Anderson suggested that the proposed increase in admission charge might have an adverse effect: 'It is the "Teddy Boys" who have money and not the students and young couples saving to get married who are our patrons'. He added, however, that the standard of the former's behaviour at the civic dances was 'very high'.<sup>114</sup>

Civic dances at the Albert Hall started in 1948, and were held monthly during the season. From the following year, they became a weekly event in the winter period. Because of their popularity, they were held weekly all year round from 1956. However, though popular, this event had to struggle to survive from the late 1950s. A special sub-committee jointly set up by the Finance Committee and the

Entertainments Committee, which aimed to investigate the declining popularity of both "Winter Gardens" and civic dances, judged that the decline in attendances at civic dances started in 1959-60.<sup>115</sup> Civic dances, which had once been the only profitable municipal entertainment in Bolton, finally moved into the red for the first time in 1963-64.

The reasons for the decline, according to the sub-committee, were:

[A] New generation [has] grown up since the dances started in 1949, and many of the type (i.e. ex-grammar school office workers, shop assistants and the like) who always come to the "Civic" now prefer the lushness and atmosphere of the modern dance hall.<sup>116</sup>

The Entertainments Committee discussed possible improvements in the atmosphere and amenities of the Albert Hall. For example, the Entertainments Committee proposed an illuminated "Dancing Tonight" sign on the canopy outside the Town Hall, but the Finance Committee was horrified by the idea and banned it.<sup>117</sup>

The Entertainments Committee's policy was heavily music-orientated. Beside the "Winter Gardens" and civic dances, the committee regularly provided other music: there were several small scale concerts, celebrity events, free midday recitals, and band music in the park during the summer. The band performances were held more than 40 times every summer,<sup>118</sup> mainly in the three largest municipal parks. Both celebrity concerts and midday recitals were held less than a dozen times every season. On average, each

celebrity concert attracted between 150 and 350 in the 1950s, with occasional lower and higher attendances,<sup>119</sup> whilst the figures for both the midday recitals and the band performances were similar.<sup>120</sup> Referring to the small numbers attending the midday recitals, a Councillor asked in 1953 why the recitals should continue if Bolton people had so little interest in serious music. Councillor Taylor, chairman of the Entertainments Committee proudly replied that the policy of the committee was to create interest, not simply respond to it.<sup>121</sup> In 1955, the Council-sponsored Bolton Musical Festival was revived for the first time since 1939.<sup>122</sup>

Among the various music-orientated projects sponsored by Bolton Corporation, the most ambitious involved giving grants to symphony orchestras whose headquarters were situated outside Bolton. In this, the Bolton Town Council played a pioneering role, gaining acceptance for the idea that a local authority might subsidise the arts. The Bolton Entertainments Committee started to give grants to symphony orchestras in 1949, as described in Chapter 6. At first, it aimed just to cover basic expenses. However, after several interviews with representatives from the Manchester Halle Orchestra and the Liverpool Philharmonic, the Committee wrote to both Manchester and Liverpool City Councils inviting them to a conference of representatives of local authorities in Lancashire and Cheshire, in order to discuss the question of local authorities jointly subsidising the two orchestras.<sup>123</sup> Although the first meeting was held in July 1950, with more than 60 neighbouring local authorities'



represented, no progress was made other than the setting up of a sub-committee.<sup>124</sup> Because of this delay, Bolton Town Council had to continue to give grants at the same level as before. In September 1951, the Entertainments Committee resolved to renew its grants of £1,000 and £200 to the Halle and the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras, respectively. This was approved by the Town Council, 49 votes to 22.<sup>125</sup> There was some strong opposition, especially among local Tory members.<sup>126</sup>

For season 1952-53, grants to the orchestras increased to £1,350 in total.<sup>127</sup> The Council, now with a Labour majority, wanted to introduce the joint subsidy scheme as soon as possible, mainly to lessen the financial burden. It was only in April 1953 that a revised joint subsidy scheme was introduced. Aldermen Vickers and Booth, both leading members of the local Labour Party, persuaded the many unwilling local authorities in Lancashire and Cheshire to adopt the plan.<sup>128</sup> This new joint subsidy plan, however, was considerably smaller in scale than the original one. For example, only £3,000 a year was to be given to the Halle Orchestra.<sup>129</sup> The amount of financial assistance from each local authority was estimated on the basis of size and proximity to Manchester and Liverpool.<sup>130</sup> From season 1954-55, Bolton Council contributed only £500 a year to the Halle Orchestra and £449 to the Liverpool Philharmonic.

How did local people receive the orchestral concerts? In the late 1950s, eight symphony concerts a year held in Bolton by the Halle and Liverpool Symphony Orchestra attracted an average audience of 1,200.<sup>131</sup> The Halle

enjoyed more support than the Liverpool Philharmonic.<sup>132</sup> Two years later the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, whose orchestra continued to make a loss, held a meeting with local experts in the field of music. The general manager and secretary of the Society asked about the music tastes of the Bolton public. Mrs. Heath, tutor of the Workers Educational Association, replied as follows: 'I think Bolton [people] like what they know - I think they are not prepared to break new ground with a symphony, perhaps with a lighter work.'<sup>133</sup> However, even the popular programmes such as the Beethoven night only attracted 40 per cent capacity,<sup>134</sup> confirming suspicions that such measures were only palliatives.

Other local experts offered different reasons for the lack of support: the lack of big names, either amongst the conductors or soloists; unsuitable dates; and lack of publicity. 'Industrial' concerts, which would be exclusively provided for the employees of one company, and operatic performances with orchestra, were suggested as ways of increasing the extent of local support. Children's concerts were also recommended, in the hope that children would inform their family members about the orchestra.

Some municipal entertainments projects were tainted by cold war politics. One controversy revolved around the question of civic cinemas. In December 1953, a member of the Entertainments Committee, Councillor Burgess, proposed a weekly civic cinema scheme, sponsored by the local authority and free of charge. He argued that: 'Regular weekly displays of films which are not available at the commercial circuits

are a contribution to adult education and entertainment which Bolton has been slow to recognise'.<sup>135</sup> The Committee agreed and authorised the chairman, vice-chairman and Councillor Burgess to arrange a series of film shows.<sup>136</sup> The weekly programmes included both left-wing British documentary films such as *Night Mail*, and foreign feature films from the U.S.S.R.<sup>137</sup>

Soon after, some public criticism surfaced. One correspondent to a local newspaper denounced the scheme in the following terms: 'The main feature in the five or six shows sponsored by this committee is in every case (modern) Communist Propaganda. Surely public money should not be used for this purpose.'<sup>138</sup> However, despite such criticism, the first shows were successful, at least in terms of audience.<sup>139</sup> After this, the Entertainments Committee resolved to stage another longer film season during the coming autumn.<sup>140</sup> The proposed 12 film programme was, however, referred back at a Council meeting to the Entertainments Committee.<sup>141</sup> The reason for this was not ideological, but financial. The Borough Treasurer reported that the Entertainments Committee had already overspent by £83, and so the Committee was forced to temporarily suspend screenings.<sup>142</sup> In the autumn of 1954, the Entertainments Committee re-commenced cinema shows.<sup>143</sup> In 1956-57, the scheme was once again temporarily suspended: to provide money for chamber concerts, civic film shows were sacrificed.<sup>144</sup> For the year 1957-58, when screenings returned, expenditure on them was just over £90.<sup>145</sup>

There was a well established consensus that Bolton needed a large concert hall. The idea was first made public by the local Conservative party in 1946.<sup>146</sup> In 1955 when the Vienna Opera House was finally re-opened, Alderman Vickers, leader of the local Labour Party, talked about his idea of building a civic hall to attract world famous musicians.<sup>147</sup> Another leading Labour figure, Alderman Booth, favoured the multiple usage of the hall for various kinds of civic entertainments, including billiards tournaments and exhibitions.<sup>148</sup> These ambitions continued to exist among some members of the Town Council. In 1958, immediately after the first brand new civic theatre built in post-war Britain opened at Coventry, the representatives of the Entertainments Committee visited that city to inspect the facility.<sup>149</sup> Afterwards, they went to see the civic hall in Wolverhampton.

A little later, the Theatre Royal, seating 1,800, came up for sale. Although this had been offered to the Council once before, the negotiation then was unsuccessful.<sup>150</sup> Now, an alderman suggested that the local authority might obtain the theatre cheaply,<sup>151</sup> and a sub-committee was appointed by the Entertainments Committee to go and hear, but not to negotiate, the conditions for sale.<sup>152</sup> Local newspapers disclosed this confidential matter, and gave support to the idea of a civic purchase.<sup>153</sup>

At a confidential meeting between representatives of the Entertainments Committee (Councillor Chamberlain, chairman, Councillor Marshall, and Alderman Booth), the chairman of the Finance Committee (Alderman Vickers), the

Director of Entertainments, and the Town Clerk, the financial implications of such a move were discussed.<sup>154</sup> It was revealed that the theatre could be purchased for £60,000. The Town Clerk stated it would require a loan sanction from the Government, which was not easy to get, but on the whole, this capital cost was not seen as much of an obstacle at the meeting. The most formidable problem was the management of the theatre. The Town Clerk suggested that there were not enough performances or shows which could suitably fill the theatre if it was in full-time operation. When he asked if there were anybody who thought that a local authority could succeed where private enterprise had failed, nobody would or could reply. Without any prolonged discussion or further enquiry about possible methods of running the civic theatre in a financially sound way, it was swiftly agreed that no further action should be taken on the question, though the final decision was passed to the Entertainments Committee.

At the following meeting of the Entertainments Committee, only Councillor Lucas explicitly opposed the rejection of the theatre purchase. He emphasised that without good amenities Bolton would not attract various new industries, which the town wanted to replace the declining cotton industry.

We are being left behind. The new towns are building concert halls, towns like Wolverhampton and Coventry... We are fighting for our lives in competition for industry: the town that is going to get it is the town that is providing the best amenities.<sup>155</sup>

However, this argument did not remove fears about finance from the minds of the other committee members. Alderman Booth moved that no further action be taken, as decided at the preceding confidential meeting, and this was passed by six votes to two.<sup>156</sup> Some efforts at finding a way to establish a civic theatre continued. In 1959, the drama director of the Arts Council of Great Britain was invited to Bolton to advise the Entertainments Committee on the question.<sup>157</sup> In 1960, the Town Council suggested that the Entertainments Committee should give consideration to the question of a suitable site or building for a civic theatre.<sup>158</sup> However, before any concrete plan emerged, the Hippodrome, the last theatre in Bolton, was sold to a local firm, with planning permission applied for allowing it to become a shop, warehouse and offices.

As I have described, Bolton Corporation's entertainments policy was heavily music-orientated. But it was also populist.<sup>159</sup> The Corporation preferred looking after as many interests as possible to supporting a big cause such as a civic theatre. In the 1950s, the Entertainments Committee backed several popular sports. In 1955, it promoted exhibition snooker matches.<sup>160</sup> The Committee also organised a successful forum for local anglers in the same year. This event was held repeatedly in later years.<sup>161</sup> In 1956, the Committee sponsored another popular sport in the locality, amateur boxing.<sup>162</sup> And lastly, in 1960, Mayor Alderman E. Taylor, former Conservative chairman of the Entertainments Committee, pledged that the Town Council should give some financial

stimulus to the declining local cricket scene.<sup>163</sup> The difficulties which the local cricket teams were facing in the 1950s will be described in the following chapter. What the Entertainments Committee was considering was a coaching scheme in co-operation with two local cricket organisations, in order to raise the interest of younger Boltonians.<sup>164</sup> Overall, the expenditure on the civic entertainments in Bolton was quite modest. As in Coventry, the net expenditure in total usually amounted to less than a penny rate.<sup>165</sup>

## 2. Commercial leisure

There were three commercial theatres in Bolton at the end of the 1940s: the Hippodrome, the Theatre Royal and the Grand Theatre. However, the Theatre Royal began to stage live theatre only occasionally at this time. The 1950s, especially the latter half of the decade, were difficult years for these local theatres. In 1955 and 1958, as I have already described, the Theatre Royal was offered for sale to Bolton Corporation. The lessee of the building, John Buckley Theatres Ltd. (later the John Buckley Circuit), temporarily closed it in 1957.<sup>166</sup> Subsequently, the company managed to survive mainly by showing films, as its manager said in 1962:

Bolton is not theatre-minded, and never has been over the years. We could never depend on local support for our live shows - our audiences were drawn from other towns. As a cinema, the theatre just about held its own in the last three or four years.<sup>167</sup>

The managing company decided to cease leasing the theatre in February 1962.<sup>168</sup> As a result, the Theatre Royal was closed down and demolished, to be replaced with a supermarket.<sup>169</sup>

The Grand Theatre, which could accommodate more than 1,000 patrons, was closed in May 1959.<sup>170</sup> It reopened in December of the same year, as a continental-style cabaret club, where customers could enjoy a show, have a meal and drink, and dance. The new theatre was leased to a London firm, Messrs Untrans, which operated many cinemas, theatres, public houses and restaurants in other towns.<sup>171</sup> On its opening day, a local newspaper reported that customers complained about draughts and the meals and drinks services, yet later they started to enjoy the dancing.<sup>172</sup> But this venue soon closed again, in July 1960. This was the end of the Grand as a theatre. The two show business promoters who were now renting the theatre told a local newspaper that they would produce 'anything' that could pay.<sup>173</sup> They converted it into a bingo club, which opened in June 1961.<sup>174</sup>

The Hippodrome had to struggle hard as well. In 1959, the proprietor of the Hippodrome bought the Lawrence Williamson Repertory Company, which had been accommodated in the theatre since 1940.<sup>175</sup> The proprietor changed the name of the repertory company to the Bolton Repertory Players. However, in January 1961, the proprietor agreed to sell the theatre to a local firm, Whitakers (Bolton) Ltd.<sup>176</sup> There was a public outcry against the closure of the theatre, with the actors and patrons demonstrating publicly.<sup>177</sup> However, at the end of July 1961, the Hippodrome was finally closed



down.<sup>178</sup> Thus, Bolton had become a theatreless town by the early 1960s.

In the first half of the 1950s, there was no change in the number of local commercial cinemas. The total remained at 19 (excluding the Theatre Royal) from the end of the 1940s, with a total capacity of 212,000 seats.<sup>179</sup> However, during this period, the ownership of several cinemas changed, some modernisation of facilities was made, and a decline in attendances set in. In 1952, the biggest suburban cinema, the Regal, with a capacity of approximately 2,000, was sold to the Progressive Publicity Company Ltd., a Manchester firm. The new managing director announced that he was going to make the cinema as comfortable as the town centre houses: it would be refurbished and equipped with a new sound system and screen.<sup>180</sup> The Regal had formerly been owned by the John Buckley Circuit, which still owned the Lido, a town centre cinema, and rented the Theatre Royal.

In the same year, another suburban cinema also changed hands. The Royal was taken over by Gardowen Cinemas, which already owned two other Bolton suburban cinemas, the Palladium and the Palace.<sup>181</sup> The new managing director stated that modern sound equipment would be installed at the Royal. In 1954, a town centre cinema, the Odeon, which was owned by the nation-wide circuit company of the same name, was provided with a CinemaScope screen, the first of its kind in the locality. A new stereophonic sound system was also introduced.<sup>182</sup> Two years later, another big town centre cinema, the Capitol, also owned by a national

circuit, the Associated British Cinemas, was given a massive refurbishment at a cost of £25,000.<sup>183</sup> By 1957, one suburban cinema, the Palladium, was also equipped with CinemaScope.<sup>184</sup>

The total number of admissions in the year between April 1950 and March 1951 was 7,271,000, which was bigger than the corresponding figure for a much larger town, Coventry.<sup>185</sup> This means that, in 1950-51, every Boltonian went to the local cinema 44 times a year on average, while in Coventry the figure was only 27. Attendances dropped rapidly during the following three years. In 1954, the number of admissions fell by more than 100,000 over the year, to a total of 6,025,000. This meant that, on average, Bolton people frequented the cinema 36 times in that year.<sup>186</sup> Table 9:1 is a comparison of cinema going in the major towns of the North Western Region.

**Table 9:1 Annual cinema admission per head of population in the North Western region, 1950/51 and 1954.<sup>187</sup>**

	<i>ratio of people to seats (1954)</i>	<i>1950/51</i>	<i>1954</i>
Salford	9.7	39	34
Liverpool	9.2	46	42
Preston	8.3	53	46
Oldham	8.1	46	40
Bolton	7.9	44	36
Blackburn	7.6	35	30
Manchester	7.1	50	45
Towns in the region with populations of over 100,000	8.2	45	40

It is clear that there was a great deal of difference in cinema-going habits even among the large towns. Manchester had the most cinemas per person, and its cinemas were well patronised. Preston, however, was the most cinema-loving town during these years, despite the fact that cinemas were relatively scarce in Preston. In Bolton, frequency of cinema-going was relatively low, despite the fact that the town had an ample provision of cinemas. The drop in attendances between 1950/51 and 1954 was sharp compared with the average figure for neighbouring towns. Thus, although the admission fees in the locality, which were always slightly below the regional average, increased from 15.2 pence in 1950-51 to 17.6 pence in 1954, the gross takings decreased from £462,000 in 1950-51 to £443,000 in 1954.<sup>188</sup>

In 1954, a local newspaper made a brief survey of the local cinema business. It reported that the attendance at local cinemas was better than a few years previously. The *Bolton Journal and Guardian* commented that television was still effecting box office receipts badly, though the situation was not as grave as in 1952, when a substantial number of local people had started to buy sets for the first time.<sup>189</sup> The reporter suggested that people who had T.V. stayed away from cinemas, but did so for financial reasons, and not because they chose to watch television as an alternative medium. The hire purchase repayments had made them wary of visiting the cinema for a while, but when these payments finished, they returned. The newspaper quoted the words of a manager at a town centre cinema:

Obviously, people who bought their sets on hire purchase scheme could not afford all their other entertainments. ... They would not give up their holidays and cigarettes, but something had to go by the board.<sup>190</sup>

Another manager of a big town centre cinema emphasised that cinema-going was still an important leisure activity, especially for housewives: 'When a wife had been in the house all day, she does not want to sit at home at night, but wants to go out for a change'.<sup>191</sup> A manager of a smaller cinema, noting the improvement of his box office, told the reporter that local people did not watch television every night, and were now choosing to stay at home some evenings but not others. He found that when sporting or other special programmes were on television, fewer people visited his cinema.<sup>192</sup>

However, in overall terms, people never came back to the cinemas as before. The rapid drop in Bolton cinema attendances, indicated in Table 9:1, started to have serious effects on the local provision of cinemas in the middle of the 1950s. From 1955, the decline of the local trade became pronounced. In 1955, an out-of-town cinema, the Astor, which had changed its name from the Regal in 1952, was closed down and converted into a skating rink.<sup>193</sup> The following year, another two suburban cinemas went out of business: the Empire, Howard Street and the Palace, at a corner of Bury Old Road and Radcliff Road. This latter venue was to be taken over by a light engineering firm.<sup>194</sup> The Palace caught fire in November. Although the damage was only partial, the directors of Gardowen Cinemas Ltd. made it clear that the Palace as a cinema was finished: 'It

definitely won't be used as a cinema again'.<sup>195</sup> It reopened as a wrestling stadium, after extensive alteration.<sup>196</sup> A few months later, the same company also abandoned the Royal at St. George's Street. The new lessee was A. Hutchinson (Cinemas) Ltd., with headquarters at Burnley and several other cinemas in the region.<sup>197</sup> A refurbished Royal, with capacity of 700, opened at the end of 1957, with a 30 feet CinemaScope screen and the newest sound system. It survived until 1967.<sup>198</sup>

In 1957 and 1958, four suburban cinemas closed down: first the Palladium, Higher Bridge Street and the Belle, Belmont Road, and then the Gem, Sheperd Cross Street and the Majestic, St. Helen's Road. The Palladium, which had been operated by a receiver for some time, was finally sold at auction, together with the abutting Carlton Ballroom, for £8,500.<sup>199</sup> Mr. G. Gardner, managing director of Gardowen Cinemas, the former owner of the Palladium, declared that he was leaving the cinema industry to become a hotel owner in the Lake District.<sup>200</sup> The Palladium was converted into another wrestling stadium by a new owner, Wryton Promoters Ltd., who staged televised wrestling shows.<sup>201</sup> The Belle was damaged by a serious fire in June 1957 so that the reopening of the cinema was considered out of the question.<sup>202</sup> Both Gem and Majestic were closed down in early 1958. Majestic was demolished to be replaced by a petrol station.<sup>203</sup>

The Crompton, another suburban cinema at Crompton Way, shut down in July 1959,<sup>204</sup> to be reopened by a new owner, the Howcroft Brewery, as a casino club with three bars, for

family entertainment of every kind, from dancing to wrestling and tombola. Club membership cost £1 a year, and before opening it already claimed to have over 400 members.<sup>205</sup> When it reopened in 1961, Alderman Edwin Taylor, now a Tory M.P., made the following speech:

I would like to thank Messrs Howcroft for their enterprise. We are living in a changing world, and this is the answer to staying at home and watching T.V. We didn't want a derelict building in a prosperous town...<sup>206</sup>

In 1960, four more suburban cinemas closed: the Ritz, Fletcher Street; the Carlton, Mount Street; the Rialto, St. George's Road; and the Tivoli, Derby Street.<sup>207</sup> The Rialto, being owned by the Rialto (Bolton) Ltd. which also owned the Queen's cinema in the town centre, was closed down and put up for sale in October.<sup>208</sup>

The Rialto remained for sale for nearly three years, during which time the Town Council twice refused to give planning permission for its conversion into a super market and a multi-storey office block. The Rialto finally became a bingo hall in 1963.<sup>209</sup> It was reported that the Ritz, owned by the G. G. Snape Group, was particularly effected by slum clearance in the area, which removed its regular customers.<sup>210</sup> Another cinema in the same area, the Windsor, which was also owned by the G. G. Snape Group, was reportedly doing good business,<sup>211</sup> but it also closed down two years later, in March 1962. It had already been used as a bingo hall on four afternoons a week for the previous six months, though every evening films had still been shown. A spokesperson for the owners told a local newspaper: 'Bingo

has certainly proved popular with our patrons - and a better proportion, so far as we are concerned, than films. This has brought about the decision to go over to full-time bingo'.<sup>212</sup>

Thus, the number of Bolton cinemas was reduced from 19 (excluding the Theatre Royal) in 1950 to only eight by the end of 1960, and just six two years later: they were four town centre cinemas and two out-of-town (the Regent, Deane Road and the Royal, St George's Road). All the town centre cinemas, which were generally larger and more comfortable than the suburban cinemas, kept their business, at least in the 1950s.<sup>213</sup>

Unlike the commercial cinema, commercial dance halls did good business in the 1950s. In 1953, there were four major dance halls in the town centre: the Palais de Danse, the Aspin Hall, the Empress and the Assembly Hall.<sup>214</sup> Nine years later, all four were still trading.<sup>215</sup> The Palais de Danse was by far the largest dance hall in the town.<sup>216</sup> In 1957, it was taken over by Mecca Dancing Ltd. and subsequently many famous dance bands made appearances.<sup>217</sup> The Assembly Hall occupied the floor above the swimming baths. There were other smaller dance halls, as well as dancing schools in the locality. The Francis Bleasdale School of Dancing, for example, which occupied the top floor of a corner building in the town centre, opened during the Second World War and continued until the late 1970s.<sup>218</sup>

Dancing took place not only in these purpose built venues but also in other places, such as social clubs, youth

clubs and local churches, and was not just limited to special occasions such as New Year's Eve, but often occurred weekly. The Derby Hall, headquarters of the Bolton Conservative Association in the town centre, was a good example. The author of Bolton town centre's history writes as follows: 'Apart from its political overtones, the Hall was a social centre and I can recall "honouring my partners" and executing many "do-si-dos" during weekly American square dance sessions in the 1950s'.<sup>219</sup>

Towards the 1960s, the number of the premises for dancing certainly increased. As I have described, Bolton Corporation started to provide a weekly civic dance all year round from 1956. Also, a cinema and a theatre were converted into a casino club and continental-style music hall, respectively, where customers could enjoy dancing themselves. Furthermore, at least two rock and roll clubs were opened in the 1950s.<sup>220</sup> When the Palais de Danse started its regular lunch-time rock and roll sessions in 1957, a reporter observed that the patrons were not exclusively teenagers.<sup>221</sup>

Turning to the drink trade in Bolton, it is apparent, first, that in the 1950s, the numbers of licensed public houses gradually declined, from 293 in 1946 to 262 in 1960.<sup>222</sup> A local newspaper reported in 1956 that no new public houses had been built for the past 50 years, though the transfer of licences between existing buildings often happened.<sup>223</sup> On the other hand, the number of political clubs with liquor licences decreased slightly, whilst



similarly licensed social and recreational clubs increased, especially in the latter half of the 1950s. From the statistics, it is apparent that the main trends in drinking habits were similar to those found in Coventry - with a decline in the number of pubs and the growing popularity of social clubs - though the extent of the changes in Bolton were much less than in Coventry.

By the mid 1950s, social conditions had changed in the locality, with consequences for local pub-going habits. As early as 1952, Mr. W. Lintott, secretary of the Bolton Licensed Victuallers' Association, highlighted the bad effect of television:

A good television programme can keep away anything up to 40 per cent of my regular custom. Most members of the Association have probably felt a similar effect. Installing television ourselves is no remedy. The customers are too busy watching the screen to drink. We still get the usual number of customers on Saturday nights, as many families like a Saturday night out as a change.<sup>224</sup>

In 1955, the president of the Bolton and District Combined Licensed Trade Association, which represented more than 140 local pubs, applied for an extension of opening hours. He pointed out that new phenomena such as shift work, longer travelling hours to work, and television, kept customers from coming earlier.<sup>225</sup> This extension was only granted in 1959, when the local pubs began staying open until 10:30 pm, except on Sundays.<sup>226</sup> Moreover, since later drinking was becoming more popular, the pubs were in a worse position than the social clubs. Although their hours open, totalling

eight, were the same as the pubs, the social clubs could choose their hours as they liked.<sup>227</sup>

A Mass-Observation study noted in 1960 that late hour and weekend drinking was quite common, though it thought the reason for this was somewhat different.<sup>228</sup> Tom Harrisson felt that local people had simply returned to their pre-war habits, after the wartime and post-war shortages of beer had disappeared.<sup>229</sup> In 1962, the Bolton and District Combined Licensed Trade Association made an application for a further extension of their opening hours. The statements of several local licensees suggested that, firstly, in the earlier part of the evenings, people tended to be attracted by other form of entertainments, such as television; secondly, during weekdays, fewer people came to the pubs, and those who came wanted to leave earlier; and thirdly, on weekends, people wanted to stay longer than before.<sup>230</sup>

A local newspaper reported in 1956 that another element challenged the traditional ways of the local drinking trades. There was a rising expectation about the comfortableness of pubs, caused by a general improvement of housing and other environments.<sup>231</sup>

Mass-Observation's survey of 'traditional' pubs in Bolton in 1960, though it scarcely explored the wider local social contexts, did make an important point about the effect of increasing car ownership on pub-going: 'The larger number of people with cars has enabled a minor mass migration out into the fields and moors on week-end nights especially in summer. Some town pubs with "classy" tone suffer a little in consequence'.<sup>232</sup>

There is another indication that the drink business was not doing well in the locality. A local brewery, Magee, Marshall and Company Ltd., which owned many local pubs in Bolton as well as in other parts of north western region, was taken over by the Greenall Whitley and Company Ltd. in 1958. Table 9:2 shows net profits for the company between 1945 and 1958, which dropped by nearly a half.

**Table 9:2 Net profits for the year ended 30th September, 1945 to 1958, Magee, Marshall and Company Ltd.<sup>233</sup>**

year	net profit (£)
1945	84,150
46	85,877
47	88,904
48	63,214
49	54,465
50	51,200
51	47,393
52	43,036
53	43,182
54	41,024
55	41,478
56	42,424
57	44,219
58	44,329

On the question of comfortableness, the renovation of local pubs did not impress one Mass-Observer, who revisited Bolton in 1960. Tom Harrisson judged the changes as superficial.<sup>234</sup> He then quoted a report made by one of his colleagues, John Sommerfield:

the changes were [sometimes] attempts at modernisation, which often resulted in considerable incongruity, such as a patch of ever-so-contemporary type wallpaper in an old-fashioned vault with wooden benches, brown grained woodwork, and worn lino on the floor.<sup>235</sup>

There was only one, among all the pubs visited, which had a television set.<sup>236</sup>

From 1957, however, newly built public houses started to appear in suburban estate areas around Bolton, for example, the Castle in Crompton and the Mosely Arms in Brightmet.<sup>237</sup> The latter even had an off-licence department with a special serving window for patrons who did not want to get out of their cars, and was expected to serve as a focal point for the neighbourhood unit.<sup>238</sup> However, one veteran licensee thought that modernisation schemes themselves put off some patrons:

I think people prefer the semi-private rooms where they can meet regularly and chat together in comfort. Even now [1960] you find that regular customers wouldn't dream of forsaking their usual rooms. You get the same people in the same rooms on certain nights, the same lads in the vault and tap-room, and none would dream of being seen in any of the other places'.<sup>239</sup>

Mass-Observation found that several other aspects of the pubs had changed in 1960. Tom Harrisson summarised them as follows: an increase in the volume of drink served; an increase of midday drinking, caused by new shift work systems in the cotton mills; more expensive beers, such as bitter and bottled beers, being consumed; women, especially young women, drinking wine-type liquors, notably Babycham and Cherry wines, rather than stouts; and finally, customers appearing in collars and ties, rather than working clothes, caps and scarves as was common in pre-war days.<sup>240</sup>

Yet, Harrisson pointed out that, although these changes, which were something to do with increasing surplus

income and less unemployment, had certainly happened, there was another and most important element of continuity, the behaviour of the customers in the pubs:

Evidence of no-change is more interesting and important than that of change. What hasn't changed is *behaviour*. You may wear a tie instead of scarf, your second best suit instead of the working clothes that had once been your only best suit, drink "best mild" instead of ordinary, twenty-two pints a week instead of twenty, and maybe put in an hour in the boozier dinner-time, which your dad in 1937 couldn't afford. But the way you behave in the pub - the rounds you stand, the conversations you have, the games you play, the outings you go on, the raffles you join - is very little different from the way your dad and his friends carried on pre-war.<sup>241</sup>

Finally, it is necessary to turn to a spectator sport, association football. Bolton Wanderers Football Club experienced increasing popularity in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Wanderers could field several international players, and became serious contenders for both in the Football League and the Football Association Cup. The author of the history of the club wrote: 'In each of the first four post-war seasons relegation was at some time or other a distinct possibility. The 1950-51 season, however, saw a turning-point'.<sup>242</sup>

In October 1950, the secretary manager, Walter Rowley, resigned because of ill health, to be replaced by Bill Ridding. The historian of the club noted that 'It had been Rowley's 39th season at Burnden and, ironically, his last had seen the foundations laid for the club to go on to greater things'.<sup>243</sup> Soon after, the club's Nat Lofthouse was widely recognised as England's finest forward, scoring

twice for England in a 2-2 draw against Yugoslavia.<sup>244</sup> The next season, the club challenged for the Football League Championship, though it eventually finished fifth. As Table K in the Appendix shows, the highest attendances at Football League home games in the post-war period were recorded in season 1951-52. In September 1951, three players from the club were chosen to represent the Football League against the Irish League.<sup>245</sup> Moreover, during season 1951-52, Bolton signed Harold Hassall from Huddersfield Town for a club record fee of £27,000.<sup>246</sup> There were so many season ticket holders that it was impossible for each of them to get even an F.A. Cup third round ticket.<sup>247</sup> Gate receipts increased from £72,798 to £88,082 in season 1951-52, a record revenue figure.<sup>248</sup> The club's final balance sheet was healthy, leaving it £13,915 in the black, most of which was paid as a dividend of five per cent. to shareholders.<sup>249</sup>

In 1953, all the Bolton Wanderers' forward line were internationals: Hughes for Northern Ireland, Willie Moir for Scotland, and Bobby Langton, Nat Lofthouse and Harold Hassall for England.<sup>250</sup> It was also in 1953 that Bolton Wanderers played its legendary F.A. Cup Final against Blackpool. Blackpool fought back to score three times in the last 20 minutes, being inspired and led by Stanley Matthews, and the Wanderers lost the final 4-3.<sup>251</sup> As Table K in the Appendix shows, local support for the Wanderers declined sharply in season 1954-55, because the club did not challenge for either the League or the Cup. Between the early 1950s and the late 1950s, average attendances at home matches fell by more than 10,000. After the 1958 F.A. Cup

Final, which Wanderers won against a Munich-weakened Manchester United, some supporters returned to Burnden Park, but only for the next two seasons of relative success.

The manager, Bill Ridding, had been making an effort to foster local talent, and to some extent, he succeeded in this during the 1950s.<sup>252</sup> However, towards the 1960s, there were no young reserves readily available.<sup>253</sup> Attendances were falling so that the club could not afford better payment for its players. In 1958, for example, Bolton Wanderers was 'the least expensive of any major club in England with no man having cost more than his £10 signing-on fee', including Nat Lofthouse.<sup>254</sup> The abolition of the maximum wage in 1960 further effected the club, making it difficult to retain players who could get better money elsewhere. The local hero, Nat Lofthouse, retired through injury in 1960. Public criticism against the management of the club began to increase.<sup>255</sup> After season 1963-64, Bolton Wanderers were finally relegated from the First Division, which the club had been in since season 1935-36.<sup>256</sup>

### Notes to Chapter 9

- 1 *BEN*, 19 December 1952.
- 2 *BJG*, 25 July 1952.
- 3 *BJG*, 6 September 1957.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *BJG*, 15 August 1958.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 T. Harrisson, *Britain Revisited* (1961), p. 37.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 10 CBB, *Year Book* (various years).
- 11 *Ibid.*; Bolton Corporation, *The Book of Bolton* (1962), p. 39.
- 12 *BEN*, 15 August and 4 December 1952; *BJG*, 1 May and 7 August 1953.
- 13 *BJG*, 6 November 1959.
- 14 Bolton Corporation, *The Book of Bolton* (1958), p. 34.
- 15 BCLA, ABCS/6/92, H. R. Davenport, Waterworks Engineer and Manager, 'Report on the present facilities for the recreational use of waterworks and gathering grounds in Bolton', 14 October 1966.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 Harrisson, *Britain Revisited* (1961), p. 38.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *BJG*, 11 September 1959.
- 20 *BJG*, 4 September 1959.
- 21 *BJG*, 11 September 1959.
- 22 See the joint circular 'Use of Reservoirs and Gathering Grounds for Recreation', written by the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Minister of Land and Natural Resources, 12 September 1966. This can be found in BCLA, ABCS/6/92.
- 23 *BJG*, 30 October 1959.
- 24 *BJG*, 27 July 1951, 30 July 1954 and 23 December 1955.
- 25 *BJG*, 31 July 1953, 17 August 1956, 27 September 1957, and 12 February 1960.
- 26 *BJG*, 23 December 1955 and 12 February 1960.
- 27 The full account of various criticisms made against the public library services which the Bolton Libraries Committee had to deal with in 1951 and 1952 can be found in Tom Dunne's unpublished D.Phil thesis, 'A History of Public Libraries in Bolton from the beginnings to 1974' (1981), pp. 815-19.
- 28 *BEN*, 28 March 1951.
- 29 BCLA, ABCF/12/11, 'Draft report of the Finance Special Sub-Committee appointed to review the various services of the Council', 1952.
- 30 *Ibid.* In 1951, a local newspaper reported that there had been a suggestion that the libraries should be closed and converted into health centres. See *BJG*, 17 August 1951.
- 31 *BEN*, 25 April 1952.
- 32 *BJG*, 25 April 1952.
- 33 *BS*, 18 September 1952.



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- 34 Bolton Public Libraries, *Ninety-Ninth Annual Report of the Public Libraries 1951-52* (1952), p. 3. It increased from 1,377,520 to 1,542,003.
- 35 BJJ, 29 September 1952.
- 36 BCLA, AB/10, Minutes of the Libraries Committee, 22 September 1952.
- 37 BEN, 25 November 1952.
- 38 BEN, 20 August 1955.
- 39 BEN, 17 August 1956.
- 40 BJJ, 1 February 1957.
- 41 Bolton Public Libraries, *One Hundred-Second Annual Report 1955-56* (1956), p. 3; BJJ, 1 February 1957; BEN, 21 October 1960.
- 42 Dunne, 'A History of Public Libraries' (1981), p. 853.
- 43 BEN, 28 September 1957; BJJ, 4 October 1957.
- 44 BJJ, 5 June 1959.
- 45 Dunne, 'A History of Public Libraries' (1981), p. 826.
- 46 The separate ladies' rooms were closed down, to be replaced with tables 'carefully segregated and labelled "For Ladies Only"'. The large newsrooms remained the same as pre-war: *ibid.*, p. 824.
- 47 Cmd. 660, MoE, *The Structure of the Public Library Service in England and Wales* (1959), Appendix IV.
- 48 BEN, 9 June 1960.
- 49 BCLA, AB/10, Minutes of the Libraries Committee, 22 September 1952.
- 50 From 1954, the Libraries Committee changed its name to the 'Libraries, Museums and Art Gallery Committee', though responsibility for both museums and the art gallery had belonged to the Libraries Committee long before 1954.
- 51 BEN, 29 November 1955.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 BEN, 24 July 1956.
- 54 In 1950, the New Overdale Youth Training Centre opened. The following description of it draws on a survey report done by the MoE: PRO, ED 149/152, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on the New Overdale Youth Training Centre, Bolton. Inspected during 1956-1957'.
- 55 PRO, ED 149/152, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on the New Overdale Youth Training Centre, Bolton. Inspected during 1956-1957', p. 3. This centre had several functions. It acted as a guest house for visitors from other towns and countries; as residential accommodation for those involved in various weekend courses; as a venue for local youth organisations celebrating special occasions; and as headquarters for the Youth Council.
- 56 PRO, ED 149/40, MoE, 'Appendix to the Report by H. M. Inspectors on the Recreational Youth Institutes maintained by the Local Education Authority in the County Borough of Bolton. Inspected Winter 1953-54: 1. Sunning Hill Youth Institute'.
- 57 PRO, ED 149/40, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on the Recreational Youth Institutes maintained by the Local Education Authority in the County Borough of Bolton. Inspected Winter 1953-54', p. 2.

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- 58 Ibid.
- 59 PRO, ED 149/40, MoE, 'Appendix to the Report by H. M. Inspectors on the Recreational Youth Institutes maintained by the Local Education Authority in the County Borough of Bolton. Inspected Winter 1953-54: 3. Brownlow Fold Youth Institute'.
- 60 PRO, ED 149/40, MoE, 'Appendix to the Report by H. M. Inspectors on the Recreational Youth Institutes maintained by the Local Education Authority in the County Borough of Bolton. Inspected Winter 1953-54: 2. Folds Road Youth Institute'.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Bolton Corporation, *The Book of Bolton* (1958), p. 34.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 BCLA, AB/4/14/7, Minutes of the Youth Committee, a list of applications for assistance, 24 October 1960.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 BJG, 19 February 1960.
- 67 BCLA, AB/4/14/7, Minutes of the Youth Committee, a list of applications for assistance, 24 October 1960.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Even the big clubs such as the Catholic Boys' Club and the YMCA lacked adequate facilities. See, PRO, ED 149/152, MoE, 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on Bolton Young Men's Christian Association, Junior Section, Bolton. Inspected during the Winter of 1959-1960' and 'Report by H. M. Inspectors on the Catholic Boys' Club, Bolton. Inspected during the Winter Season, 1958-59'.
- 70 BEN, 15 January 1957; BJG, 12 February 1960.
- 71 BJG, 12 February 1960.
- 72 BCLA, ABCF/23/61, letter, the Chief Constable to the Chairman and Members of the Watch Committee, 19 September 1956. The Chief Constable of Bolton recommended the ban, reporting as follows:  
     The exhibition of this film has been the means of causing widespread disorder in numerous towns. Inside cinemas, young patrons have seriously damaged furniture and furnishing; have wantonly displaced fire fighting appliances; sprayed water from fire hose on the management and audience, and created chaos until ejected by the police. In the streets they have impeded motor vehicles, and their disorder has caused grave clashes with the police resulting in many instances with arrests on charges of disorderly behaviour.
- 73 BJG, 21 September and 5 October 1956.
- 74 BJG, 22 May 1959.
- 75 In 1957, it was reported that three local youths took a van for a joy ride to Blackpool Illuminations. See, BJG, 20 September 1957.
- 76 BJG, 8 October 1959.
- 77 BEN, 7 April 1952.
- 78 BEN, 9 April 1952.
- 79 BJG, 22 February 1957.
- 80 BEN, 5 June 1956.

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- 81 Ibid.
  - 82 *BJG*, 1 January 1960.
  - 83 *Harrisson, Britain Revisited* (1960), p. 40.
  - 84 *BJG*, 1 January 1960.
  - 85 *BJG*, 12 October 1951.
  - 86 *BEN*, 23 December 1952; *BJG*, 5 June 1953.
  - 87 *BJG*, 25 October 1951.
  - 88 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/11*, statement showing attendances at Winter Gardens since 1947-48, [April 1956].
  - 89 *BEN*, 23 July 1952.
  - 90 *BJG*, 23 January 1953.
  - 91 *BEN*, 23 July 1952 and *BJG*, 23 January 1953.
  - 92 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/11*, memorandum, the Town Hall Steward to Philip S. Rennison, the Town Clerk, 17 February 1956.
  - 93 Between May 1955 and May 1956, the Entertainments Committee was not a standing committee of the Town Council, but a sub-committee of the Parks Committee.
  - 94 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/11*, Notes on points raised at interview of the Town Hall Steward, 13 March 1956.
  - 95 *BEN*, 14 March 1956.
  - 96 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/11*, Notes on points raised at interview of the Town Hall Steward, 13 March 1956. Councillor Young stated: 'I understand in the first place the idea of Winter Gardens was to get young people together and keep them off the monkey parades under the auspices of some responsible people, and the idea of entertainment was a secondary matter'.
  - 97 *BEN*, 22 February 1956.
  - 98 *BEN*, 1 March 1956.
  - 99 *BEN*, 22 February 1956.
  - 100 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/11*, note, Winter Gardens, etc., Sub-Committee, 20 July 1956.
  - 101 *BEN*, 1 March 1956.
  - 102 Bolton Corporation, *The Books of Bolton* (1958), p. 34.
  - 103 *BEN*, 7 December 1957.
  - 104 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/11*, note in draft minute book, Entertainments Committee, 16 April 1957.
  - 105 *BEN*, 7 December 1957.
  - 106 *CBB*, *Abstract of Accounts for the Year ended 31st March, 1951*, pp. 176-77.
  - 107 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/11*, various financial reports made by Borough Treasurer's Department on the events organised by the Entertainments Sub-Committee, between September 1955 and February 1956.
  - 108 *CBB*, *Abstract of Accounts for the Year ended 31st March, 1951*, pp. 175-77.
  - 109 *BJG*, 25 October 1952.
  - 110 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/11*, various financial reports made by Borough Treasurer's Department on the events organised by the Entertainments Sub-Committee, between September 1955 and February 1956. Each civic dance made a surplus of more than £34.
  - 111 *BCLA*, *ABCF/1/13*, letter, Town Clerk to J. A. Coop, Youth Section Convener, Bolton Labour Party, 4 October 1956.
  - 112 *BJG*, 17 August 1956.
  - 113 *BEN*, 15 August 1956.

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- 114 Ibid.
  - 115 ABCF/1/19, notes at a meeting of sub-committee's of Finance and Entertainments Committee, 15 August 1963.
  - 116 Ibid.
  - 117 BEN, 12 September 1963.
  - 118 CBB, *Abstract of Accounts* (various years).
  - 119 BJG, 15 April 1954; R. D. Waller, A. Wilson and R. Ruddock, *After Work: Leisure and Learning in Two Towns* (1959), p. 50.
  - 120 CBB, *Abstract of Accounts* (various years); BCLA, ABCF/1/20, 'band performances in the parks' [1962].
  - 121 BJG, 21 August 1953.
  - 122 BJG, 28 January, 18 February, 26 April and 3 June 1955.
  - 123 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 7 February 1950.
  - 124 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 16 July 1950.
  - 125 BJG, 5 October 1951.
  - 126 BJG, 5 October 1951.
  - 127 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 19 February and 18 March 1952. £1,000 went to the Halle and remaining £350 to the Liverpool.
  - 128 BJG, 17 April 1953.
  - 129 C. B. Rees, *One Hundred Years of the Halle* (1957), p. 151.
  - 130 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 9 June 1953.
  - 131 Waller, Wilson and Ruddock, *After Work* (1959), p. 50.
  - 132 BJG, 11 December 1953; Rees, *One Hundred Years* (1957), p. 147.
  - 133 BCLA, ABCF/1/10, note, 'Meeting of Representatives of Musical Organisations Regarding Concerts in Bolton by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra', 17 February 1955.
  - 134 Ibid.
  - 135 BCLA, ABCF/1/8, 'Specimen, 16mm Film Programmes', compiled by Councillor Burgess, [December 1952].
  - 136 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 16 December 1952.
  - 137 BCLA, ABCF/1/8, 'Revised list of the films to be shown, Lecture Theatre, Central Library', 20 January 1953.
  - 138 BEN, 25 March 1953.
  - 139 BEN, 24 July 1953.
  - 140 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 21 July 1953.
  - 141 BCLA, Minutes of the Council Meeting, 5 August 1953.
  - 142 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 18 August 1953; BJG, 21 August 1953. Bolton Corporation spent only just over £27 on civic film shows in the first year of the event. See the revenue account of the Entertainments Committee, in CBB, *Abstract of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March, 1954*.
  - 143 BCLA, AB/30/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 19 October 1954.
  - 144 BEN, 24 February 1956; BJG, 2 March 1956.

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- 145 See the revenue account of the Entertainments Committee, in CBB, *Abstract of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March, 1958*.
  - 146 BEN, 23 October 1946.
  - 147 BJG, 11 November 1955.
  - 148 Ibid.
  - 149 BCLA, AB/30/1/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 8 October 1958.
  - 150 BJG, 7 January 1955.
  - 151 BCLA, ABCF/1/15, a note on the meeting about Theatre Royal, 8 December 1958.
  - 152 BCLA, ABCF/1/15, a note of comments and points made at meeting of Entertainments Committee, 10 December 1958.
  - 153 BEN, 5 December 1958.
  - 154 BCLA, ABCF/1/15, a note on the meeting about Theatre Royal, 8 December 1958. The following account is based on this note.
  - 155 BCLA, ABCF/1/15, a note of comments and points made at meeting of Entertainments Committee, 10 December 1958.
  - 156 Ibid.
  - 157 BJG, 13 November 1959.
  - 158 BCLA, AB/30/1/2, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 14 September 1960; BJG, 30 September 1960; BEN, 13 October 1960; BJG, 14 October 1960.
  - 159 BJG, 11 February 1955.
  - 160 BJG, 7 January 1955; BCLA, AB/30/1/1, Minutes of the Entertainments Committee, 18 January 1955.
  - 161 This was called 'Fisherman's Forum'. See various correspondence between the Entertainments Committee and the Bolton and District Anglers' Association, in BCLA, ABEN/1/2, correspondence folder, Bolton and district Anglers' Association, 1954-65.
  - 162 BJG, 15 June 1956.
  - 163 BCLA, ABCF/1/16, a draft, addressed to the Council members by Mayor [June 1959].
  - 164 BEN, 7 January 1960.
  - 165 See, Institute of Municipal Entertainment, *A Survey of Municipal Entertainment in England and Wales* (1964).
  - 166 BEN, 26 January 1957; BJG, 1 February 1957.
  - 167 BEN, 2 February 1962.
  - 168 Ibid.
  - 169 G. Readyhough, *Bolton Town Centre: A Modern History: Deansgate, Victoria Square, Churchgate and Adjoining Areas from 1900 to 1982* [1982], p. 37.
  - 170 Ibid, p. 36.
  - 171 BJG, 30 October 1959.
  - 172 BEN, 2 December 1959.
  - 173 BEN, 12 June 1961.
  - 174 BEN, 21 June 1961. The bingo club only lasted 18 months; then the building was demolished to be replaced by office buildings. See, Readyhough, *Bolton Town Centre* [1982], p. 36.
  - 175 BEN, 5 October 1961.
  - 176 Ibid.
  - 177 Ibid.
  - 178 Readyhough, *Bolton Town Centre* [1982], pp. 5-6.

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- 179 An official survey ('Cinema-Going in London and Provinces', *Board of Trade Journal*, 19 November 1955, p. 1112) showed that in 1954 there were 19 commercial cinemas in Bolton, whilst the earlier statistics (H. E. Browning and A. A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and Cinema-Going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A (General), Part 2, Vol. 117 (1954), p. 138) noted that in 1950-51 there were 20 local cinemas. This difference probably occurred because the latter included the Theatre Royal, whilst the former excluded it.
- 180 *BEN*, 17 September 1952.
- 181 *BEN*, 6 December 1952.
- 182 A. Aston, 'The "Odeon" Cinema Bolton: A Study of a Bolton Cinema' (unpublished paper, 1979), p. 5.
- 183 *BEN*, 18 April and 28 June 1956.
- 184 *BEN*, 7 November 1957.
- 185 Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas and Cinema-Going', p. 138.
- 186 'Cinema-Going in London and the Provinces', *Board of Trade Journal*, 19 November 1955, p. 1112. The figure of 36 was based on the population figure in 1951. As the Bolton population was declining in the 1950s, if we calculate using the figure for 1954, which is 165,600 according to the local authority's *Year Book*, the revised figure should be slightly bigger, i.e. 36.4.
- 187 'Cinema-Going in London and the Provinces', *Board of Trade Journal*, 19 November 1955, p. 1112; Browning and Sorrell, 'Cinemas and Cinema-Going', p. 138.
- 188 *Ibid.*
- 189 *BJG*, 21 May 1954.
- 190 *Ibid.*
- 191 *Ibid.*
- 192 *Ibid.*
- 193 Interestingly, the building was originally opened as a skating rink in 1909, then converted into a cinema in 1912. *BEN*, 27 February 1961.
- 194 *BEN*, 24 August 1959.
- 195 *BEN*, 29 November 1956.
- 196 *BJG*, 21 October 1960.
- 197 *BJG*, 28 December 1957.
- 198 Readyhough, *Bolton Town Centre* [1982], p. 26.
- 199 *BEN*, 7 and 9 November 1957.
- 200 *BEN*, 22 February 1958.
- 201 *Ibid.*
- 202 *BEN*, 24 August 1959; *BJG*, 21 October 1960.
- 203 *BEN*, 22 August 1958.
- 204 *BEN*, 11 August 1959.
- 205 *BEN*, 2 June 1961.
- 206 *BEN*, 12 June 1961.
- 207 The Rialto and the Tivoli closed in October 1960. See, *BJG*, 21 October 1960.
- 208 *BEN*, 13 October 1960.
- 209 *BEN*, 3 January, 7 February and 21 August 1963.
- 210 *BJG*, 18 March 1960.
- 211 *Ibid.*

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- 212 BJB, 2 March 1962. The Windsor was finally demolished in March 1963: BEN, 14 March 1974.
- 213 The Lido changed hands in 1962, from the John Buckley Circuit to Star Cinematic Associated Holdings of Leeds. Then it was converted to yet another casino in 1963. However, this was an unsuccessful venture. It soon returned to being a cinema in 1964. The Queen's cinema lived a little longer, to be closed down in 1966, to reopen as a bingo hall three years later. See, BEN, 2 March 1962; G. Readyhough, *Bolton Town Centre: A Modern History: Bradshawgate, Great Moor Street and Newport Street 1900-1984* [1984], pp. 10 and 14.
- 214 C. H. Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 108; Readyhough, *Bolton Town Centre* [1982], pp. 11, 28 and 31.; and his *Bolton Town Centre* [1984], p. 12.
- 215 The Bolton Corporation, *The Book of Bolton* (1962 edition), p. 36.
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- 223 BJB, 30 November 1956.
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## Chapter 10: Associational and Home-Based Leisure, Coventry and Bolton, 1950s

### Works recreation

Throughout the 1950s, Coventry's works recreation retained its significant status in the local leisure world. The most eminent part was sport. Firstly, there were steady improvements in the local industrial sports facilities in the 1950s. In 1951, Coventry Chain Company Ltd. provided a new bowling green at the firm's social club sports field.<sup>1</sup> A few months later, the Daimler Company also provided a new bowling green at its sports ground.<sup>2</sup> In the same year, Humber Ltd. rented 50 acres of municipal land for its recreation ground on a 90 year lease.<sup>3</sup> In 1952, GEC provided additional football and cricket pitches as well as extra spectators' accommodation at its sports ground.<sup>4</sup> In 1959, the Alfred Herbert Machine Tool company, the most puritanical and paternalistic employer in Coventry, provided a bar for its recreation club house for the first time.<sup>5</sup> In the case of GEC, allotments as well as sports facilities were provided.<sup>6</sup> The quality of sports facilities provided by local industrial firms remained the best in the city. In 1958, bowling greens at GEC were chosen for a County Match.<sup>7</sup> Facilities at the GEC golf club were also regarded by its members as 'second to none' at the end of 1950s.<sup>8</sup>

The precise number of local industrial sports and recreation clubs which existed in the 1950s is unknown. However, generally speaking, activities among industrial sports clubs continued to flourish well into the 1960s. The

CWSA gradually expanded its members and activities in the period. In 1954, a new dominoes section started with 12 teams.<sup>9</sup> In 1956, another new section, the photographic section, was formed.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, at the end of the decade, a horticulture section established itself, with eight works societies containing more than 2,000 members.<sup>11</sup> The badminton section formed a ladies league in the early 1960s.<sup>12</sup>

Most existing sections of the CWSA certainly extended their membership and activities in the 1950s. The association football section increased its membership from 30 clubs in 1955 to 53 with four divisions in 1960.<sup>13</sup> The cricket section reported that there were nearly 2,500 playing members in 1960.<sup>14</sup> In 1953, the equivalent figure was 1,800.<sup>15</sup> The netball section, exclusively for women workers, continued to expand its membership throughout the post-war period. In 1953, it had four divisions with 300 players.<sup>16</sup> In 1960, the section was running six divisions, containing 56 teams from 36 works clubs with 500 players.<sup>17</sup> Within a few years of its formation, the photographic section had expanded to include 17 works clubs.<sup>18</sup> There were, of course, slightly less successful sections. The rugby football section had only five clubs, although the total number of players increased.<sup>19</sup> The darts section experienced a relative difficulty in sustaining its popularity, especially among male participants. In 1951, there were two men's leagues and a ladies' league, which had 32 teams and 13 teams respectively.<sup>20</sup> In 1953 the league had 72 teams in total, but the figure decreased to no more

than 65 in 1958, of which 16 were in the ladies' league.<sup>21</sup> The most difficulty, however, was felt by the athletics section, which ceased to function somewhere in the early 1950s.

Therefore, overall, most sections succeeded in increasing their memberships. At the annual general meeting in 1954, when the CWSA celebrated its 21st anniversary, an official proudly reported its remarkable post-war growth, claiming its active membership was now nearly 8,000.<sup>22</sup> In 1960, the total membership of the CWSA reached well over 10,000, as the following table shows.

**Table 10:1 Sectional membership of the Coventry Works Sports Association, 1960.<sup>23</sup>**

section	membership
angling	2,000
association football	1,500
badminton	2,500
billiards and snooker	370
bowls	530
cricket	2,500
darts	900 (including 300 women)
dominoes	300
horticulture	2,000
netball	500
photographic	500
rugby football	250
total	13,850

The activities of the local industrial sports clubs were not confined to participating in the CWSA. Many industrial sports club teams joined community based leagues, as well as competing in various cups and championships sponsored by a local newspaper and other organisations.<sup>24</sup> Some works teams

of a lower standard, which could not enter the CWSA leagues, joined local district leagues.<sup>25</sup> Works sports clubs centred around sports like hockey, golf, amateur boxing, swimming and table tennis finding no place in the CWSA, tended to play in community based leagues. Alfred Herberts had its five table tennis teams in a local community league, the Coventry and District Table Tennis League, which had nearly a hundred teams in total.<sup>26</sup> Works chess clubs, such as those of Daimler, Courtaulds, Standard Motors, Dunlop, Wickmans, Jaguar and GEC, belonged to the Coventry Chess League.<sup>27</sup> Other clubs, like the newly formed Judo club at the GEC in the middle of the 1950s, were just concerned to develop skills without any competition.<sup>28</sup>

Standards of play were sometimes fairly high in the early 1950s, and the bowls section of the CWSA provided the All England champion.<sup>29</sup> Several netball players from GEC were repeatedly chosen for British national teams.<sup>30</sup> The GEC netball club complained that a scarcity of qualified umpires was an obstacle in raising standards.<sup>31</sup> Another GEC sports club, the association football section, was coached by a Birmingham City football player.<sup>32</sup> The Standard Rugby Football Club was once chosen to play an international game on the day before the Ireland and England International in Dublin.<sup>33</sup> Sometimes, fierce competition occurred. The Chairman of the Dunlop Cricket Club regretted this, declaring:

League cricket [CWSA league cricket] today is becoming a very keen affair. I do not think this is a good thing, but we must move with the times,

and any team which hopes to do well must have the will to win.<sup>34</sup>

It appears that overall participation in these works sports and cultural clubs in Coventry was high. At the end of 1952, the Standard Motor Company Recreation Club had 34 sports sections.<sup>35</sup> The Rootes football club fielded four representative teams of 61 players in 1954. Furthermore, there were 14 inter-departmental sides in the firm, comprising 150 players.<sup>36</sup> In the later 1950s, the Alfred Herbert angling section had 100 members, which was a post-war record.<sup>37</sup> At the end of the 1950s, the Alfred Herbert Recreational Club had more than 15 sections.<sup>38</sup>

Certainly, more employees participated in their own departmental events than those playing in the company's official teams. These more informal social and sport events often took place at shop floor departmental level or were organised according to the employees' status. Many local firms had apprentices associations for young workers; social outings exclusively for foremen were organised at Alfred Herbert; seasonal sporting matches between 'office workers' and 'factory workers' were also organised; and numerous seasonal social, dinner and outings were organised at many different departments of firms. For the majority of employees, occasions such as Sports and Gala Days, Christmas parties, and particularly departmental socials, dinners and outings, appeared more desirable. The Alfred Herbert annual field day attracted 5,000 people including children in 1950, although the figure dropped down to half that in the next year, when other more attractive events took place on the

same day.<sup>39</sup> In 1952, over 5,000 employees and their families and friends turned up at the GEC sports and gala day. Throughout the 1950s, somewhere between 3,000 and 3,500 children of GEC employees enjoyed the annual children's' Christmas party.<sup>40</sup>

For many male employees, who participated in various sports events, social drinking, which usually took place at the bars attached to the sports clubs, seemed indispensable. For example, the 'Tool Room' social group at Alfred Herbert organised every kind of sports matches between their 'Over 30s' and their 'Under 30s'. These events took place either at the company's recreation grounds, local working men's social clubs, or local pubs. Certainly, for this group, choosing municipal sports facilities, where licensed facilities were not available, was out of the question.<sup>41</sup>

Even if male culture was dominant in works sporting activities, female employees' interest in sporting activities seemed to grow steadily in the 1950s. The remarkable growth of the netball section of the CWSA has already been mentioned. Women only teams in some sports also began to form in the period. In 1957, women members of the GEC rifle club formed their own teams for the first time, and successfully competed in the Coventry Works League.<sup>42</sup> Although they finally failed to organise sufficient fellow women workers to form ladies' cricket teams, an initial effort to build women-only teams was made both at the Alfred Herbert and the GEC factories.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, what were the relationships between the industrial sports and recreation clubs and the employers?

The archives of GEC, Alfred Herberts and Standard Motor Company suggest that industrial leisure activities were highly independent and largely free from the control of the employers. The general secretary of the Standard Recreation Club stated that sectional activities and affairs had 'always been regarded as the private business of the committees concerned'.<sup>44</sup> When a new series of rigid instructions for sectional management was drafted by a company solicitor, the general secretary expressed his concern as follows:

After all the people responsible for the affairs of these various sections are unpaid and to do the job purely for the love of the sport which they are administering, and whilst the more intelligent amongst them will read the directive and understand that we are not interfering in their set-up, there are many who will no doubt arrive at the wrong conclusion.<sup>45</sup>

The employers' role in works recreation was just to provide better facilities, but not to control their management. They seemed well aware that interference in daily activities of sports and recreational clubs would lead to difficulties with their member-employees. However, this 'hands off' policy was also desirable for employers in terms of cost. Most sports and recreation activities were being financed mainly by the memberships, with little contribution from the employers.

Compared to Coventry, in Bolton recreational facilities provided by industrial concerns were of much smaller scale, and had little distinctive status. For example, all the

sports teams of the Walker Institute social club were integrated into various community based local leagues:<sup>46</sup> its three football teams were competing in the Bolton and District Combination, the BSSSL, and the Bolton Boys Federation, according to skill and age; two bowling teams were in the Bolton Workshop and Social Clubs League, whose membership in fact was open to bowling teams of any type,<sup>47</sup> and tennis, snooker and rounders teams were also members of the BSSSL.

The club house of the Walker Institute was also well equipped with indoor games facilities such as billiards, dominoes, table tennis and darts. It even had a debating society as well as a dramatic society.<sup>48</sup> William Walker and Sons Ltd. was one of few Bolton firms which could expand its welfare facilities for its employees. The company reportedly stated that investment in workers' welfare facilities would have a good effect on the man at the bench. It constructed a new football pitch in 1953.<sup>49</sup> It was reported that the number of active regular members were about 200 out of the 1,500 employed.<sup>50</sup>

Among the local cotton mills, the Eagley Mills were probably the best patrons of works recreation. It supported not only sports sections such as cricket and tennis, but also cultural groups including a brass band<sup>51</sup> and hand crafts. Its art society had 114 members who were interested in dressmaking, woodwork, and embroidery.<sup>52</sup> Another cotton firm, Deakins Ltd, opened a new recreation club for its employees in 1957, which had a billiards room, as well as card, reading and games rooms.<sup>53</sup> However, the club was not



exclusively for its employees. The membership was open to the residents in the immediate community. The company had always preferred to be a patron for the community, and not just for its employees.<sup>54</sup>

A national tailoring company, Montague Burton, which was employing about 1,600 workers in its factory in the early 1950s,<sup>55</sup> provided good works' amenities. The company had a sports club, and in 1959, facilities for association football, cricket, lawn tennis, table tennis, bowls, swimming, billiards and snooker were available.<sup>56</sup> Its association football pitch was established in 1948, with comfortable dressing rooms and bathing facilities. Towards the end of the 1950s, a nearby private tennis club was obtained by the company to become the employees' tennis club. There were also an amateur dramatic society and a camera club.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, there was at least one loss of works' playing fields at the end of the 1950s. Knowles Ltd. abandoned its playing fields at Church Road, and this became municipally-owned ground in 1960.<sup>58</sup>

For many smaller firms and branch factories, it seemed impossible to provide any sports pitches or other recreational facilities. A mill in Bolton's neighbouring area, which employed only 150 employees, had no such recreational facilities other than minimum welfare provision, canteen and washing. The manager was, however, proud of them, saying that: 'Any girl can go straight to a dance after she has finished here'.<sup>59</sup> The main social and recreational activities among such smaller firms were of a

seasonal character, such as occasional outings<sup>60</sup> and dances at a local hall.<sup>61</sup>

However, lack of sports and recreational facilities did not necessarily mean lack of interest in the activities among employees. There were many local clubs attached to cotton mills and other industrial firms, even without adequate sports facilities. The point was that they were well integrated into the community based leisure activities. Many works sports teams usually joined local sports leagues, renting municipal facilities and mixing with other pub or church clubs. Exclusive industrial sports activities hardly existed.

### Leisure in associational forms

One of the most popular participatory outdoor sports for the male public in Bolton was, as in Coventry, association football. Early in the 1950s, the football league of the BSSSL had three sections with more than 30 teams.<sup>62</sup> The participants were mostly attached to churches, youth organisations, mills, or other kinds of local firms. Its popularity never declined in 1950s Bolton. Even at the end of the decade, the shortage of both grounds and referees was reported.<sup>63</sup> Another big competitive league was the Bolton and District Amateur Football Combination. In the early 1950s, it was divided into three sections with no fewer than 40 teams.<sup>64</sup> Every year, there were clubs which resigned, to be replaced by new comers. Those clubs which could not raise eleven players, or had no home ground, had to leave. In the early 1950s, when the Eagley Spinning Company started to

operate short-time working, its football club was no longer able to field enough playing members. The club first asked the Combination committee to postpone a few matches, because its members were getting temporary jobs elsewhere.<sup>65</sup> But short-time continued, and finally the club had to resign from the Combination.<sup>66</sup>

Although the Combination contracted into a two division league in the 1950s, towards the 1960s, it became a three division league again.<sup>67</sup> Apart from the league competition, the Combination organised two cup tournaments,<sup>68</sup> and sometimes inter-league matches, especially with the Blackburn Combination. Many of the teams were local firms, and most of them played on municipal pitches.<sup>69</sup> The North End Football Club, the leading second division club in 1959, was renting a municipal pitch, as well as space in a local church for changing. One member told a local newspaper that: 'Our pitch and accommodation may be a bit rough, but we don't play that way. We're amateurs and sportsmen'.<sup>70</sup> Because the number of municipal pitches were in short supply throughout the 1950s, several teams could not find any pitches to play on.<sup>71</sup>

However, the administration and management of the Combination were sound as in the 1940s.<sup>72</sup> One club was expelled in 1956, because it had failed to pay the required referee's fees on two occasions.<sup>73</sup> Overall, playing standards seemed to be good, and on one occasion, the President of the Combination expressed his hope that one or more amateur internationals would be selected from Bolton.<sup>74</sup> The Combination also improved its benefit scheme for injured

members.<sup>75</sup> In 1960, its financial position was healthily in the black.<sup>76</sup> Although small honorariums were made to the secretary and the assistant secretary,<sup>77</sup> all the work was done by volunteers who loved football.

In addition to these two senior football leagues, there was a junior league in Bolton, the Bolton Boys' Federation, which had three sections with about 45 teams altogether.<sup>78</sup> Other less visible amateur football activity also existed in Bolton during the decade. Two local football teams joined the Manchester and District Wednesday League. They were the Bolton Co-op and the Bolton Market in retailing trades.<sup>79</sup> There was also an Irish Gaelic football team, the Shannon Rangers, as well as a women's football team.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, in the second half of the 1950s, a summer tournament was organised by the Bolton Summer Football League.<sup>81</sup>

The 1950s was a difficult decade for amateur cricket clubs in Bolton. Many clubs struggled to survive. The Edgworth Recreation Cricket Club in the first division of the Bolton and District Cricket Association experienced a big financial loss, as well as insufficient numbers of the officials and declining support from the spectators.<sup>82</sup> In 1955, the Club received only just over £13 through the gate, but made a handsome profit of £100 from social events organised by the ladies' committee.<sup>83</sup> Due to a decline of both membership and gate receipts, and to increasing costs, many other clubs had to rely on their women's committees, which organised various socials and rummage sales.<sup>84</sup>

However, the women's work was not always enough. Another measure was to increase the subscription rate for

membership. For example, the Eagley Cricket Club had to raise its subscription level in 1954, to maintain the club as self-supporting.<sup>85</sup> The officials of the club blamed the rising cost of ground maintenance, coach and professional expenses. Here, as with other clubs, both the number of members and gate receipts decreased.<sup>86</sup>

Contrary to the heroic efforts done of women members, there is evidence to suggest that the standard of play and the commitment of male players declined. In 1953, the Egerton Cricket Club admitted at its annual general meeting that the poor gate receipts partly reflected the indifferent displays of their own teams.<sup>87</sup> In 1955, it was reported that, out of 45 members of the Little Hulton Cricket Club who actually had played in the previous season, only 13 paid subscriptions.<sup>88</sup> Some officials of the local clubs complained not only that younger people were difficult to recruit in general, but also that their existing young members would not forgo leisure time for net practice.<sup>89</sup> In 1957, at the annual general meeting of the Bradshaw Cricket Club, one of the biggest local clubs with 800 members, it was revealed that there was a serious division among committee members. One stated that there was a working men's committee and a gentlemen's committee. He continued: 'they [the gentlemen] all sit round the table and propose things... but when it comes to doing the work, the gentlemen sit back while working men do the work. Some of them are not worth their place.'<sup>90</sup> Several other members supported this allegation, and more new members were elected to the committee for the new season. The club, trying to lift

members' morale, proposed a recruiting drive to increase the membership to a thousand, which totally failed.<sup>91</sup>

Being alarmed by the deteriorating situation, in season 1956, the Bolton Cricket League launched several experiments to 'provide a better class of cricket and to promote support and enthusiasm'.<sup>92</sup> The new initiatives, however, did not work well. The worsening financial position of many local clubs was shown by the falling number of professionals engaged. In 1956, the Bolton and District Cricket Association had eight clubs which engaged a professional player, while all the twelve clubs in the Bolton Cricket League had one each.<sup>93</sup> In 1957, only five professionals were employed in the Association.<sup>94</sup> The situation did not get better later in the decade. In 1959, only four clubs in the League and five in the Association were prepared and able to pay for professionals.<sup>95</sup> Professionals increased the standard of play and generated better attendances.<sup>96</sup> However, some clubs felt that their professionals were not value for money. The Egerton Cricket Club had a substitute professional in season 1955, during which they did not win a league match.<sup>97</sup> The treasurer of the Little Hulton Cricket club proposed that clubs in the Association should contribute a certain amount of money to a collective pool in order to hire a few first-class coaches to tutor younger players, instead of engaging professionals.<sup>98</sup>

Some clubs tried to attract more people by introducing Sunday cricket. In the first half of the 1950s Sunday cricket was not allowed in Bolton.<sup>99</sup> It gradually expanded in the later 1950s. In 1956, the Astley Bridge Cricket Club

decided to introduce it. A local newspaper reported that at the same time, a proposal to introduce alcohol drinking to their bars was put forward, but was killed 'without question'.<sup>100</sup> In 1957, another League cricket club, Tonge, decided on Sunday play by a clear majority.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, strong opposition against Sunday cricket remained in some quarters. Although it was favoured at the annual general meeting of the Bradshaw Cricket Club, its management committee rejected the idea.<sup>102</sup> In spite of these difficulties, most clubs survived in the 1950s. In 1959, there were 12 clubs in the Bolton Association, and three divisions with 12 teams each in the Bolton and District Cricket League.<sup>103</sup>

Although a women's county cricket match was once held in Bolton,<sup>104</sup> the most popular participatory women's sport there was rounders. In the early 1950s, the rounders league enjoyed enormous popularity, more so than in the late 1940s. In season 1950-51, there were more than 1,300 registered players with 76 teams, a record.<sup>105</sup> In 1953, 70 teams entered the league competition, which was six more than in the previous year.<sup>106</sup> In 1955, nearly a thousand players were still officially registered,<sup>107</sup> and fixtures were played every evening except on Friday and Saturday during the summer.<sup>108</sup> However, towards the end of the 1950s, the sport declined considerably. Before the 1959 season, several teams from the local cotton mills left the league, though there were enough new teams, which were mostly non-mill teams, to fill the vacancies.<sup>109</sup> In that year, there were

still six sections with nearly 50 teams. In 1960 only 40 teams were competing.<sup>110</sup> At the annual meeting, the extension of shift working in local mills was blamed for this decline.<sup>111</sup>

The women's hockey league of the BSSSL began the 1950s with 34 teams in three sections.<sup>112</sup> In 1952, the national finals was held in Bolton.<sup>113</sup> However, the sport was steadily losing its appeal throughout the decade. In 1953, the total number of teams decreased to 28.<sup>114</sup> As with the rounders league, most teams were from local mills, factories, churches and youth clubs. In 1955, although the league affiliated to the All England Women's Hockey Association, the number of teams in the league further decreased to 25.<sup>115</sup> By the early 1960s, only about 15 teams remained in the league.<sup>116</sup> Compared with rounders and hockey, netball was a minor women's sport in the locality. There was a local women's netball league with about 10 teams, which were from mills, churches, and youth clubs.<sup>117</sup>

Among other minority sports, the lawn tennis league of the BSSSL enjoyed growing popularity until the end of the 1950s, expanding to five sections and a friendly section, from only three sections in the 1940s.<sup>118</sup> In 1950, there were 17 teams in the league, which increased to 37 in 1958.<sup>119</sup> However, the growing popularity of the sport did not continue. In the following year, only 30 teams in four sections competed in league matches.<sup>120</sup> The Badminton league of the BSSSL had over 30 teams in four sections around the middle of the 1950s.<sup>121</sup> In 1955, there were 452 registered players in 21 member clubs with 33 teams.<sup>122</sup> The



strong presence of Bolton players in the Lancashire and Cheshire championship was also reported in the first half of the 1950s.<sup>123</sup> Most teams were of local mills, firms, churches and youth organisations.<sup>124</sup> In 1960, the number of registered teams slightly increased to 37, from 36 in 1959.<sup>125</sup>

The BSSSL table tennis league, which increased its membership steadily up to season 1951-52, experienced a marked drop in membership during the following year.<sup>126</sup> However, it gradually regained its popularity,<sup>127</sup> and in 1955, the number of registered players was 406 with 36 clubs.<sup>128</sup> In the latter half of the 1950s, although the number of clubs in the league increased, the total number of registered players remained no more than those in the early 1950s.<sup>129</sup>

If association football was the most popular participatory sport for the younger public, bowling was undoubtedly the most popular outdoor sport among the elderly in Bolton.<sup>130</sup> The sport was well organised on a competitive basis, and revolved around the Bolton Workshops and Social Clubs Bowling League, the Bolton Mills Bowling League, the Bolton Parks Amateur Bowling Association, the Bolton Municipal League, and the Conservative Bowling League. There was also the Bolton Carpet Bowling League, which was made up of about a dozen, mostly church related clubs.<sup>131</sup> The officials claimed that Bolton was the centre for carpet bowling in England, pointing out the above average number of clubs affiliated to the national association, the English

Carpet Bowling Association.<sup>132</sup> In 1958, an International Carpet Bowls Match was held in Bolton.<sup>133</sup>

The Bolton Workshops and Social Clubs bowling league was the largest organisation. No fewer than 55 teams entered in the summer of 1954.<sup>134</sup> As the title of the league suggests, most affiliated clubs came from local companies or social clubs, with a few from the churches.<sup>135</sup> In 1955, it was decided to change the title to a more appropriate one, the Bolton and District Bowling League.<sup>136</sup> The fixtures for 1955, when a slightly decreased 53 teams were to compete, spread over three days a week.<sup>137</sup> In 1958, when a separate ladies' section was established with seven teams,<sup>138</sup> the number of men's teams was 40.<sup>139</sup> The Bolton Mills league also had a large number of teams. In 1953, four sections with about 40 teams were operating. It was a league drawn mostly from local cotton mills, but there were a few other factories involved.<sup>140</sup> In the Bolton Parks Amateur Bowling Association, over a dozen teams competed throughout the 1950s.<sup>141</sup> There was a separate parks league for veterans. Another small local bowling league was the Municipal League, in which about 10 teams from various departments of the local authority were competing, including those of the General Post Office and North West Electric.<sup>142</sup> At the end of the 1950s, the Conservative league had 11 teams.<sup>143</sup>

There were other popular forms of sport, which were based mainly around public houses or social clubs. Firstly, there was angling. The sports pages of the local newspapers suggest that competitive angling was well supported in the early 1950s.<sup>144</sup> The largest organisation in the locality

was the Bolton and District Anglers' Association, which claimed more than 4,000 members and 47 affiliated clubs in 1959.<sup>145</sup> The Association was a member of the Northern Anglers' Association, and was organising three major competitions every year: the Bolton Annual, Cup, and Shield. In addition to these, of course, local anglers joined various other competitions organised outside the town.<sup>146</sup> There were at least two other smaller angling associations: the BSSSL angling league and the Bolton Rivers Angling Society, which was newly established in the latter half of the 1950s.<sup>147</sup>

The popularity of darts as a winter indoor sport in Bolton remained in the 1950s. There were at least five major darts leagues in the locality: the Bolton and District Darts League, the BSSSL Darts League, the newly established St. Dunstan (Bolton branch) Darts League, the Peter Walker (Bolton) League, and the Magee Marshall League sponsored by the local brewery. The St. Dunstan league, which was formed by a break-away members from the BSSSL league, began with 87 team members in 1951.<sup>148</sup> In season 1952 - 53, the league had seven men's and a women's section, with 92 and 16 teams respectively.<sup>149</sup> The number of affiliated teams increased to 163 (124 men's and 39 women's teams) in 1954.<sup>150</sup> Although no more growth was recorded in the second half of the 1950s, there were still no fewer than 120 teams in total playing in 1960.<sup>151</sup> Most of the teams belonged to pubs, clubs, or churches. The league donated more than £720 in the first five years to the St. Dunstan Institution, in order to help blind people.<sup>152</sup>

Nearly 200 teams competed in the Bolton and District Darts League in 1951, and the fixtures stretched over every weekday evening.<sup>153</sup> However, the membership of the league declined, and in 1955, there were only 52 men's and 17 women's teams.<sup>154</sup> Even the declining BSSSL league had four men's sections and a women's section in 1953.<sup>155</sup> The Magee Marshall league, which was based exclusively on the brewery's tied public houses, was a similarly-sized, with five men's and one women's sections.<sup>156</sup> There were other smaller leagues including, from 1953, the 'Over 60s' darts league with nine teams, 10 teams by 1960.<sup>157</sup> The Conservative Association league, which was exclusively based on local Conservative clubs, had 12 teams in the middle of the 1950s.<sup>158</sup>

Apart from normal competitions, these leagues organised charity matches, cup competitions, and inter league matches, not just within the locality, but also with leagues in other towns.<sup>159</sup> Top standard players competed in Lancashire county matches.<sup>160</sup> Another point to be made is the relatively strong presence of women in the sport, though they were a minority compared with men. Overall, the local darts world continued to be popular during the 1950s. In 1957, a local newspaper reported that many local clubs and pubs had two darts teams, and that hardly any had not joined in the local leagues.<sup>161</sup>

Billiards and snooker were both popular indoor games in Bolton. The billiard league of the BSSSL had three sections with 26 teams in 1953,<sup>162</sup> and in 1955, it dropped to 22.<sup>163</sup> Its snooker league had 36 teams in three sections in 1955,

and 40 in 1960.<sup>164</sup> The Bolton and District league was a large mixed league of teams from local firms, churches and social clubs. In 1954, no fewer than 32 teams were competing in the league.<sup>165</sup> The Congregational Federation and the Conservative Association's Whitehouse Snooker League were small leagues. For example, both of them had only two sections with 14 teams in 1955.<sup>166</sup> Their range of activities were similar to those of the darts leagues. Many competitions and inter-league matches were held, often in order to help charities.<sup>167</sup> In sharp contrast with darts, there were no women's sections in the billiards and snooker leagues. One common visible characteristic for these indoor sports was the relatively older ages of the participants compared with the BSSSL. There were probably no pub clubs which took part in the league activities of the BSSSL.

Many more minor recreational sports clubs existed in and around Bolton, promoting cycling,<sup>168</sup> motor cycling, athletics and judo.<sup>169</sup> Swimming in general, but especially competitive swimming, was losing its appeal in Bolton during the early 1950s. In 1952, the local medical officer stated that interest in swimming had been declining in the last 15 years.<sup>170</sup> However, there is evidence that participatory swimming was regaining its popularity in the late 1950s. In 1959, the number of paid members of the Bolton Swimming Club increased to 546, and it was in a very healthy financial position.<sup>171</sup> The club claimed membership was higher than ever before in 1960, and the drop of gate receipts for match programmes was recovered by the increasing income from membership and teaching sessions.<sup>172</sup>

In Bolton, club life was not given as much publicity as it was in Coventry, although the total number of licensed clubs increased from 63 in 1950 to 67 in 1960.<sup>173</sup> In 1960, there were 41 general social and recreational clubs, and 26 political clubs, though the number of the political clubs declined towards the end of the fifties. There were more Conservative clubs than Liberal or Labour.<sup>174</sup> Membership varied: in 1952, Bolton Central Conservative club had 640 members, while the Central Reform Club had 240.<sup>175</sup> Tonge and Brightmet Conservative club was so popular that in 1958 new membership was temporarily refused.<sup>176</sup> The Recreation Club at Hulton, originally formed as a Labour club in 1923 but becoming non-party in 1932, was also popular. In 1957, a local news paper reported that the club had been under extensive reconstruction costing £14,000, and that membership was over 700 and increasing.<sup>177</sup> The political dimensions of club life further diminished in the period. The Bolton and District Federation of Labour Clubs was actually disbanded in 1957.<sup>178</sup> Reflecting the increased number of immigrants living in Bolton, the Bolton International Club was launched in 1956.<sup>179</sup> Club premises were at New Overdale and its main purpose was to offer a sociable place for members, many of whom were Asians and Arabians. Social clubs for elderly persons seemingly remained popular. For example, the 'No. 1 Sunshine Over 60s club' claimed about 500 members.<sup>180</sup>

There were many cultural societies in Bolton. Local interest in amateur drama and opera were well represented. Bolton Little Theatre, a well known amateur dramatic society in the locality, presented several plays a year, with special Christmas shows and open air performances in Moss Bank Park.<sup>181</sup> It had its own playhouse, donated by a local businessman, with a young theatre group and speech training classes, and also accommodated the Bolton Film Society.<sup>182</sup> Towards the end of the 1950s, the theatre had about 800 subscribing members.<sup>183</sup> The Bolton Amateur Operatic Society, which produced high quality popular operas and operettas, made an annual appearance for a week at the Theatre Royal under a professional producer.<sup>184</sup> All the receipts went to local charities. In the late 1950s, the society had about 1,000 subscribing members in addition to 100 acting members.<sup>185</sup>

Apart from these two major societies, there were several others which attracted members from across Bolton and its area: the Rosemere Amateur Operatic Society, which specialised in Gilbert and Sullivan; the Sweetlove Amateur Operatic Society, which formed in 1950 and produced mainly musical comedies; the Bolton Dramatic Society; and the Phoenix Club, which presented modern popular but adventurous plays.<sup>186</sup> In addition to these, there were many smaller dramatic societies, mostly attached to the local churches and a few to local firms. Their memberships were comparatively youthful. A survey revealed that almost all the dramatic and operatic societies in the locality were composed of people under thirty.<sup>187</sup>

Towards the end of the 1950s, many of the amateur dramatic societies attached to local churches and factories collapsed. In a few years at the end of 1950s, at least six of these societies disappeared, mainly because they had failed to recruit male acting members.<sup>188</sup> This decline of interest seemed to be restricted to the smaller societies. Whilst the Rosemere Amateur Operatic Society, established in 1928, was losing its popularity by 1958, the newly established Phoenix Club was increasing its membership, focussing on new theatrical trends.<sup>189</sup> The Bolton Amateur Operatic Society was in difficulty after the closure of the Theatre Royal.<sup>190</sup> The Bolton Little Theatre was thriving, being televised in 1957,<sup>191</sup> and especially so after all the local commercial theatres ceased to function in early 1961.<sup>192</sup>

The Bolton Choral Union gave seasonal concerts of oratorios and operas, with professional guest soloists.<sup>193</sup> Though it always faced financial difficulties,<sup>194</sup> the Union was the only local music organisation which had a grant from the Bolton Town Council and the Arts Council.<sup>195</sup> At the end of the 1950s, there were at least five brass bands in Bolton, which used to rehearse by-weekly, join various competitions,<sup>196</sup> and play locally, including engagements at the Civic Dances and the 'Winter Gardens'. Their members were mainly middle aged men.<sup>197</sup>

In 1950s Coventry, a wider range of associational recreation became available, while those activities of a traditional type retained their popularity. Most sports



clubs, except those of the larger firms, were unable to afford their own facilities, and played on municipal grounds. Every year, various sports clubs attached to local firms and shops, working men's clubs, pubs, community centres, churches, youth centres and other voluntary organisations, applied for cricket, football, tennis and bowling pitches. In 1952, 29 cricket clubs, 15 tennis clubs and 10 bowling clubs applied for pitches.<sup>198</sup> The local Working Men's Club and Institute Union cricket league was partly organised on municipal pitches, because some of the working men's clubs did not have their own cricket pitches. Interestingly, local people in the printing industry seemed fond of bowling, and ran the Coventry Printing and Allied Trades Bowling League on municipal rinks, while the sporting interest of those in the building trade was cricket, which was organised in a league.<sup>199</sup>

The monthly reports of the Coventry Corporation's Parks Department suggest that, towards the end of the 1950s, the number of applications for municipal pitches gradually decreased. However, this was probably because many clubs had become able to afford their own facilities. This seemed to be the case particularly for sports which needed relatively smaller pitches, such as bowling. In 1959, at least six bowling clubs and ten tennis clubs applied for use of the municipal grounds.<sup>200</sup> These figures do not reflect the actual popularity of the sport at that time. For example, the Coventry and District Thursday [Crown] Bowling League increased the number of its divisions from three to four in 1951.<sup>201</sup> In 1955, 31 teams in 4 division competed in the

league.<sup>202</sup> In 1961, there were still at least 24 cricket clubs applying for municipal pitches.<sup>203</sup> On the other hand, new sporting activities began to emerge on the local municipal pitches around the end of the 1950s: baseball and Gaelic football.<sup>204</sup>

The most popular sport played on the public parks, however, was as before, association football. In 1958, 55 municipal football pitches were fully booked, and some applications had to be turned down, because of the shortage of pitches. In 1960, the figure was up to 58.<sup>205</sup> This meant that, every Saturday afternoon, 116 amateur association football teams played in the public parks. In contrast to cricket, which was often played on a friendly basis, all the association football clubs applying to the Parks Department were organised into leagues. In 1960, there were nine amateur football leagues operating in the local public parks, including church related leagues. Among them, the biggest were the Combination League and the Coventry and District Football League. As I described in Chapter 7, the league's peak season was 1948-49, when 68 teams including reserve sides were involved. For season 1951-52, there were four divisions comprising 45 teams in total.<sup>206</sup> Throughout the 1950s, although there were fluctuations, the number of member teams did not decline, but again increased. In 1954, the league had 48 teams with no less than 1,300 registered players.<sup>207</sup> In season 1955-56, nearly 1,500 players from 50 teams were registered.<sup>208</sup> Although smaller participation was recorded for seasons 1956-57 and 1957-58, in the season

1961-62, the jubilee year of the league, the number of member teams had risen again to 59.

A majority of the clubs continued to exist throughout this period. Every season, less than 10 teams resigned, and there was always a newly formed team which was ready to replace them. The main problem which the management committee of the league had to face was shortage of qualified referees. At the beginning of the 1950s the league was experiencing great difficulty in allocating a referee to every match, and claimed that 50 more referees were required.<sup>209</sup> In September 1956, it was reported that 14 extra referees were wanted every Saturday.<sup>210</sup> Because of the seriousness of the referee shortage, the league often had to employ 'unofficial referees' to complete the fixtures. It was only in the early 1960s that the situation somewhat improved. There were always disciplinary problems in the management of the league. However, the general conduct of the players was good, and league officials often remarked that the standard of play was improving. Every season, no more than ten players were dealt with by the parent organisation, the Birmingham County Football Association, mainly because of dissension against referee's decisions.

There were several other minor sports groups which used to play and train mainly on the municipal grounds and facilities, such as rugby football, netball, cycling and athletic clubs. The Coventry Godiva Harriers and the Coventry Cycling Club were based at the Corporation owned track near the city centre, the Butts Stadium. There were

four swimming clubs which shared the only public swimming bath in Coventry. Attendance and composition of membership were very different from club to club.<sup>211</sup> There were seasonal fluctuations in attendances. July to September was always the peak period and January and February usually recorded the lowest attendance. Each club had the use of one night a week exclusively. In addition to the above, the Coventry Swimming Club was also organising water polo fixtures once a week, and the Enterprise Swimming Club for Disabled People used the bath on Saturday nights.<sup>212</sup> All of these clubs were mainly for recreational swimming. Promising competitive swimmers in the clubs would join coaching classes organised by the Coventry and District Association of Swimming Clubs. Certainly, Coventry was a town deserving a modern central swimming bath which could stage international competition. The city had two Olympic swimmers towards the end of 1950s.<sup>213</sup>

Of course, numerous sports and games in associational forms took place in Coventry without using municipal facilities. Among these, angling was certainly the most popular sport in the locality. The Midlands had many good waters in and around its boundaries, notably the River Severn. Many angling clubs were attached to local pubs and social clubs, and a well established club could easily have more than 100 members.<sup>214</sup> Many of them affiliated to the Coventry and District Angling Association. The Association used to rent excellent waters, where national contests of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union were repeatedly held.<sup>215</sup> The Association used to organise several contests

and inter-city matches a year, including the Mayor's Cup. Although in the early 1950s the secretary of the Association worried that rising living costs might affect its membership, any loss of membership turned out to be only temporary.<sup>216</sup> The Association strove after national honours in match fishing during the post-war period.<sup>217</sup> Billy Lane, the then Coventry captain who belonged to a local pub team, held six national gold medals and two international gold medals. In six years up to 1961, the Coventry Association won the 'All England' three times.<sup>218</sup> Also noteworthy in terms of competitive fishing was the angling section of the Coventry Working Men's Club. The section won 27 of the Warwickshire Working Men's Club and Institute Union championship angling matches in 28 years.<sup>219</sup>

Angling was not an exclusively male sport in Coventry. Already in 1951, ladies and young people were prominent in the contests organised by the Coventry and District Angling Association.<sup>220</sup> There was a formidable problem from which local anglers suffered in the post-war period. The Avon river, which many Coventry anglers patronised, was polluted badly in the 1950s. The irony is that the main reason behind the pollution was the inadequate sewage treatment facilities at Coventry, which had failed to keep pace with rapid population growth.<sup>221</sup>

Coventry was once known as the town of the bicycle industry. Although cycling was a sport pursued apparently by fewer people than angling in Coventry, a local newspaper could list at least 15 local cycling clubs' schedules in 1951.<sup>222</sup> The Coventry Cycling Club was a competitive club,

which used to organise racing at the municipal Butts Stadium.<sup>223</sup> The vigorous branch activity of the Cyclists' Touring Club continued in the locality. During winter time, the social season, a series of lectures, socials and dances were organised. A major annual lecture, chaired by a local M.P. or by the Mayor, could attract an audience of more than 500. In the summer, regular Sunday runs and weekend and holiday tours were well supported.<sup>224</sup> By 1955, touring abroad was organised, to countries as far as Spain and Yugoslavia.<sup>225</sup> It is not clear whether the membership in Coventry declined as it did in the parent organisation.

Table tennis was quite popular in Coventry. In 1951, the Coventry Table Tennis Association was running seven leagues.<sup>226</sup> The success of this body was partly due to the fact there was no works league for the sport organised in the locality. By the middle of the 1950s, Judo was firmly established in Coventry. Canley Judo Club, which was based at the Canley Community Centre, won the Baron Matsui Cup at the Royal Albert Hall beating 320 other clubs in the country.<sup>227</sup> The club had 60 members including women, though there were only three black belt players in the town.<sup>228</sup> There was also the Coventry and District Pigeon Racing Club. Details about its activities and membership are not clear, but in the middle of the 1950s, its 19 members dispatched 134 birds to Durham.<sup>229</sup> In 1960, it was reported that 21 members in a northern area of Coventry, at Longford and Foleshill, were still racing pigeon competitively.<sup>230</sup>

What kind of indoor games were organised into league competitions in the locality? In 1951, the Coventry

[Contract] Bridge League had 4 division with 28 teams. Many of them were industrial teams, but there were also a few community based teams.<sup>231</sup> During season 1950-51, it established a ladies' committee.<sup>232</sup> A local newspaper reported 'a flourishing state of affairs in all directions' as regards the league, with a 32 team record entry.<sup>233</sup> In and around the Foleshill area, a Snooker League of two divisions comprising 18 teams existed at the end of the 1950s.<sup>234</sup> In 1951, the Coventry Chess League had four divisions with 39 teams.<sup>235</sup> In 1955, the league had slightly fewer teams, 33 in all.<sup>236</sup>

Arts or cultural associations attracted considerably fewer people than sports organisations could do. A new arts club, the Umbrella Club, was inaugurated in 1955, to foster various arts interests in the locality. The club's orientation was rather high-brow. Even its most successful section, the film group, could not escape from financial problems. Although there were 130 members in 1960, this was not enough to meet the cost of showing continental films. Turnover among the membership was high: only half of the 130 enrolled in 1960 had been members during the previous year.<sup>237</sup> Finally, there was a new development of club activity along ethnic lines. The newly formed Eastern Entertainment Society provided cultural entertainments for immigrant families from India and Pakistan. The Society organised a film show for 500 people at a local cinema in the Foleshill area in 1954.<sup>238</sup> As I noted in Chapter 7, a local Irish organisation converted a cinema theatre into a social and recreation centre for Irish immigrants in 1956.

At a local church hall, in 1957, Caribbean people organised calypso nights every Monday, when the hall was not used. A local newspaper reported that 50 people gathered despite the wind and rain. The paper concluded that they were 'looking hard and long for somewhere they can relax among their own folk'.<sup>239</sup>

The significant role of the working men's social clubs continued and expanded in the fifties. Many of the clubs claimed quite large memberships, by the end of 1957, 51,000 in total.<sup>240</sup> Coventry Corporation fully recognised the importance of these social clubs in the life of the local community, especially since their number more than doubled between 1951 and 1959, from 31 to 65.<sup>241</sup>

The social clubs were often established by the enormous efforts of a small resident group, sometimes with a loan from a brewery. In this way, a social club was provided in one of Canley's new housing estates, where there were no pubs.<sup>242</sup> Another social club was erected in a new neighbourhood unit at Willenhall, where no social amenities had previously existed. It was formed by a small group of local residents and within six months of opening, claimed 1,000 members, and completed an extension scheme to its premises within a year.<sup>243</sup> A few of the bigger clubs of this kind boasted membership of 2,000 and above,<sup>244</sup> as already noted in a previous chapter. In the first quinquennial review of the 1952 Development Plan, it was confirmed that club life in Coventry remained vibrant.<sup>245</sup>

As we have seen, a wide range of recreational activities took place at the social clubs. The Canley Social



Club, which had 600 members at the end of the 1950s, had impressive facilities, including a large hall for dancing and other social functions; a games room with facilities for billiards, snooker, darts and other games; and two football pitches. Along with various sports programmes, varied entertainments were provided. The members' wives and children were also allowed into the club.<sup>246</sup> The Radford Social Club was able to provide a boxing ring for a local tournament in its spacious hall. Among its organised activities, sports both of an indoor and outdoor type were prominent, though its male voice choir was also well known.<sup>247</sup> Finally, it should be pointed out that both in Coventry and Bolton, raffles and other forms of small lotteries were indispensable feature not just in most of the clubs, but also in other educational and cultural societies, including churches.<sup>248</sup>

### Importance of home

The GEC works magazine, *The Loudspeaker*, continued to compile information on its workers' spare time habits in the fifties. In total, nearly 300 male manual workers and more than 100 women manual workers were asked what their leisure interests were between 1951 and 1960. Their responses confirmed that spare time activity based on home and family was by far the most important, as it had been in the forties. Of the various ways of spending spare time at home, the most popular activity was gardening. More than 40 per cent of male respondents and more than 20 per cent of women replied that gardening was one of their spare time habits.

Among men, next to gardening, home repairs, and painting and decorating were popular. With some other home-related habits such as woodwork, cabinet making and model making, these activities appealed to many male. On the other hand, they were not so common among women. Knitting, sewing, needlework, embroidery and reading were women's main interests at home, though the last appealed to men as well.

One new and important innovation in home-related spare time in the 1950s was television viewing. In December 1949 the first provincial relay station opened at Sutton Coalfield near Birmingham. In 1955, there were 2,000 more television than sound broadcast licences in Coventry.<sup>249</sup> Even in 1960, when short-time working started in some local factories, an increase in television sales continued, so that the number of television licences issued in Coventry had nearly doubled to 82,758 since 1955.<sup>250</sup> In 1957, the ratio of television licence numbers to the whole population in Coventry was one to five. In more middle-class areas such as Stratford, Leamington and Nuneaton, television ownership was even higher.<sup>251</sup> A local survey revealed that in a new housing estate at Canley, about 60 per cent of households had a television set in 1958, and one half of them had both BBC and ITV channels.<sup>252</sup> In Bolton, after Holme Moss transmitting station opened in October 1951, television ownership grew rapidly. In May 1954, a local newspaper reported that half of local households would soon have a set.<sup>253</sup>

Those GEC workers in Coventry, who replied that television viewing was one of their spare time pleasures

roughly doubled between the first and second halves of the 1950s. Both men and women were fond of television. However, often television viewing was not an attentive activity, but more a restful form of passing time.<sup>254</sup> On the other hand, many people were discriminating viewers and their liking of particular programmes was often something to do with their other spare time hobbies. A worker who had played football and cricket and was still keen on all kinds of sport now watched it on television.<sup>255</sup> He was typical of many male workers. There were also many people of both sexes who liked watching plays on television.

Among home- and family-centred leisure, motor car related hobbies, such as weekend motoring and car maintenance, also increased in popularity, particularly among men. In Coventry, there were 42,461 private motor cars currently in use during the third quarter of 1960,<sup>256</sup> which was more than three times higher than the figure for 1951. This means that more than 44 per cent of households had a car.<sup>257</sup> Coventry had very high car ownership.<sup>258</sup> In Bolton, car ownership was much lower. There were only 12,170 private motor cars registered in 1960, which means that only 22 per cent of private households had a car.<sup>259</sup> GEC respondents replied that they liked weekend motoring with their families.<sup>260</sup>

We can observe that home and family centred leisure was especially important for three social categories: the older person; the person who had dependents, such as children or aged parents; and the person who had acquired their own home. The following are some typical examples from the GEC

magazine. Age was an important element which tended to make people's leisure home-centred. A fitter was described in the following terms: 'He used to be quite a keen swimmer and he did a spot of running but now, apart from watching a few football and cricket matches in season, he prefers to fill his leisure with reading--particularly of the "Who done it" kind'.<sup>261</sup> A retiring miller with 37 years service in the toolroom, who had played cricket in his youth, now intended to catch up on the sport by reading.<sup>262</sup> Another worker, who was near retirement, and already had grandchildren, was described in the following way: 'Once an active member of the British Legion and an energetic supporter of welfare schemes, gardening, the T.V. and the quieter side of home life appeals to him now'.<sup>263</sup>

Many GEC workers, both men and women, gave up their leisure activities of earlier periods after having children. A women brazer who had a daughter claimed that she had little time for leisure activities. She used to like dancing and running, but now 'family life' dominated her time, so that knitting and needlework were her only hobbies.<sup>264</sup> A once active association football player and cyclist admitted that his small daughter was demanding more and more time.<sup>265</sup> A cabinet assembler, once an active member of the works Angling Society, had to cut his trips to the river, because of his 10 month old son's heavy demands.<sup>266</sup> The nine year old daughter of a male adjuster increasingly claimed her father's time, even though he liked 'dabbling with engines' and was 'always ready to help friends and neighbours with theirs'.<sup>267</sup> Old aged parents, too, had to be looked after.

This was the case especially for women workers. A female on the assembly line, who loved letter writing, said that the rest of her spare time was occupied 'in running for her mother and herself'.<sup>268</sup>

Home-ownership made people more home-centred. A married woman at GEC who had moved into a new flat replied that her and her husband's time were 'very fully occupied' with their flat.<sup>269</sup> A woman worker on wiring, who liked variety and musical comedy, now was fully occupied by married life and a newly acquired house, and could find little time for other interests.<sup>270</sup> Being a Coventry City fan, as well as a member of the Angling Society, a male worker on drilling confessed that he had developed a real interest in gardening only after he had moved into his new house.<sup>271</sup>

The GEC workers often said that there were so many things to do with families or houses that they could not spare any time for other purposes. A pipe fitter said 'apart from a bit of bricklaying, repairs to boilers and the building and maintenance of [his] greenhouse', he had never had time for hobbies and recreation.<sup>272</sup> A relay shop worker, whose spare time was fully occupied with his children, home repairing and decorating, and gardening, said: 'I have no time for getting around outside'.<sup>273</sup> In this sense, home and family centred leisure was often very much shaped by constraints, though undoubtedly the home centred workers were able to find enjoyment and satisfaction with these activities.

Often, home centred leisure activities were just a way to rest or relax, though, they were not without enjoyment,

and sometimes brought a sense of achievement. GEC Women workers claimed that, after their work and housekeeping activities, their radio listening, knitting or sewing soothed their nerves, and were thus satisfying.<sup>274</sup> Often people regarded their television viewing as primarily a form of relaxation.<sup>275</sup> However, sometimes people felt that their home and family centred leisure resulted not from free choice but just from necessity. Although many serious amateur gardeners would take their flowers and vegetables to shows, other admitted that they hated gardening but had to do it.<sup>276</sup>

### Trips and holidays

In the 1950s, the local demand for summer holiday trips never declined. In 1951, seaside resorts such as Blackpool, Morecambe, North Wales and Scarborough had reportedly regained their popularity among Bolton people.<sup>277</sup> Butlin's holiday camp at Pwllheil attracted about 2,000 Boltonians, and another camp at Prestatyn had 1,700 in the same year.<sup>278</sup> The popularity of holiday camps among local people never declined in the 1950s.<sup>279</sup> As I noted already, in 1953, Butlin's Holiday Company donated £3,000 to the local Council for establishing a pavilion on a municipal playing field.<sup>280</sup> This clearly shows that Boltonians were important customers for Butlins, and in fact Bolton was one of only seven towns which were offered this donation by the company.<sup>281</sup>

However, at the same time, there were many workers who stayed at home during the summer holiday weeks. Families took half day excursions to Morecambe, Southport, the Lake

District, and above all Blackpool. In the summer of 1955, it was reported that some 6,000 local people went on a day trip by coach every day.<sup>282</sup> Others visited a local park or took a local bus tour organised by Bolton Corporation. The popular sports enclosure organised by the Entertainments Committee at a local municipal park was packed during the holiday week with the peak number of 4,000.<sup>283</sup>

Shortly before the summer of 1952, local cotton workers won the right to take two weeks annual holiday with pay.<sup>284</sup> Despite this, 1952 was the year when the cotton industry felt its first recession. In that year, it was reported that the Easter holidays were merely an extension of a period of lay-offs, so that cotton workers could only afford day excursions instead of their usual weekend stay away holidays.<sup>285</sup> Withdrawals from the Bolton Saving Bank for the summer holiday weeks dropped by £50,000, from £800,000 in the previous year.<sup>286</sup> The Entertainments Committee organised the first post-war 'holiday-at-home' weeks in the municipal parks.<sup>287</sup> But the effect of the recession on local holiday habits was not so bad as many had predicted. A local newspaper was happily surprised to find that the holiday movements were as busy as in the previous years, despite the drop in people's spending power.<sup>288</sup>

The set-back was short-lived. In 1955 and 1956, the Bolton Savings Bank paid out about £1,250,000 per annum. to various local saving clubs from mills, works, churches, Sunday schools, and others.<sup>289</sup> Nevertheless, even in 1955, a local newspaper estimated that only half of local residents took a holiday away from home.<sup>290</sup> Certainly,

holidays abroad were rare among ordinary people in Bolton. In the middle of the 1950s, for most Bolton people, 'going abroad' meant going 'across the sea', rather than going to continental countries.<sup>291</sup> In 1960, however, Tom Harrisson wrote that more Bolton people now went to the Costa Brava, Majorca and Geneva, speculating that: 'many Worktowners in Blackpool now are those who could *not afford to go away at all* when Worktown had many thousands of unemployed'.<sup>292</sup> Whilst more local people ventured further afield, the popularity of Blackpool never dropped greatly. Blackpool was judged as 'popular as ever' in 1960, very much as before.<sup>293</sup>

The holiday and tourist industry in Coventry steadily grew in the 1950s. There were only three tourist and travel agents in the 1948 local telephone directory. This increased to 16 in 1960.<sup>294</sup> Every summer, local newspapers contained headlines such as: 'More Holiday Makers Leave The City'.<sup>295</sup> Both the local railway station and local coach firms were kept busy during every summer holiday. In 1960, between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. on the first Saturday of the local industrial holiday fortnight, some 100 coaches left Pool Meadow, the city coach station.<sup>296</sup>

By the middle of the 1950s, even continental holidays were not so rare among Coventry factory workers.<sup>297</sup> Majorca was one of the most popular destinations. In 1957, air travel was reportedly experiencing a 'great boom'. Air travel became cheaper than ever before, and many customers were those who had been on foreign holidays before. The Poly Tours bureau stated that aircraft rates were 'usually very



little more than second-class train fares'.<sup>298</sup> In 1960, at the first weekend of the fortnight industrial holiday in Coventry, 6,000 people flew from Birmingham airport. Many of them came from Coventry, and an airport manager said air travel was no longer only for singles with money: 'I noticed particularly that there is a marked increase in the number of families going abroad. There were a remarkable number of prams and push-chairs loaded on to planes'.<sup>299</sup> However, many stayed at home, doing window shopping in the city centre or venturing out only for a couple of day trips. In 1960, a local newspaper reported that during the local industrial holiday weeks, the city centre car parks were packed even on weekdays.<sup>300</sup>

Notes to Chapter 10

- 1     *CET*, 7 May 1951
- 2     *CET*, 23 July 1951.
- 3     *CET*, 6 July 1951.
- 4     *Loudspeaker*, vol. 6, no. 5 (June 1952), p. 101.
- 5     *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 34, no. 1 (January-February 1960), pp. 20-21.
- 6     *Loudspeaker*, vol. 7, no. 6 (September 1953), p. 143.
- 7     *Loudspeaker*, vol. 13, no. 5 (Christmas, 1959), p. 259.  
There was not a single municipal green suitable for county matches: *CET*, 29 October 1955.
- 8     *Loudspeaker*, vol. 12, no. 1 (February 1958), p. 22.
- 9     CRO, Acc 847, CWSA, minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, 30 September 1954.
- 10    CRO, Acc 847, CWSA, minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 24 May 1956.
- 11    *Ibid.*, 30 May 1960.
- 12    *Ibid.*, 22 May 1963.
- 13    CRO, Acc 847, CWSA, minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, 18 August 1955; minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 30 May 1960.
- 14    CRO, Acc 847, CWSA, minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 30 May 1960.
- 15    *Ibid.*, 28 May 1953.
- 16    *Loudspeaker*, vol. 7, no. 4 (May-June 1953), p. 82; *CET*, 29 May 1953.
- 17    CRO, Acc 847, CWSA, minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 30 May 1960.
- 18    *Ibid.*
- 19    *Ibid.*
- 20    *CET*, 11 April 1951.
- 21    CRO, Acc 847, CWSA, minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 28 May 1953 and 22 May 1958; *CET*, 5 December 1958.
- 22    *CET*, 9 October 1954.
- 23    CRO, Acc 847, CWSA, minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 30 May 1960 and 22 May 1963: note: figures for angling and dominoes refer to 1963.
- 24    For example, the Standard [Motor Company] Rugby Football Club affiliated to both the Works Rugby Football Union and the Coventry and District Rugby Football Union: MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/PER/CL/1, letter, F. G. Ford to Mr. Aspland, n.d.[January 1952]. The Standard Athletic Football [association football] Club was a member of both Coventry and North Warwickshire League and of the Coventry Works League: MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/PER/CL/1, letter, K. Aspland to Mr. A. E. Holbrook, 2 September 1952.
- 25    For example, the third team of Alfred Herbert Billiards and Snooker Clubs competed in the Foleshill and District League, while the other two teams were in the Works League. See, *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 26, no. 1 (March-April, 1952), p. 28.
- 26    *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 28, no. 2 (March-April 1954), p. 63.
- 27    *CET*, 18 October 1955.

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- 28 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 11, no. 5 (Summer 1957), p. 214.
  - 29 *CET*, 1 December 1951.
  - 30 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 6, no. 9 (November 1952), p. 212.
  - 31 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 7, no. 4 (May-June 1953), p. 82.
  - 32 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 5, no. 6 (July 1951), p. 118.
  - 33 MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/PER/CL/1, a brief report of the Standard Rugby Football Club's activities for season 1951-52, 2 October 1952.
  - 34 *CET*, 29 October 1955.
  - 35 MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/PER/WE/1, a draft on industrial welfare, written by P. C. Cleydon, the Canteen, Social and Welfare manager of the Standard Motor Company, [November 1952].
  - 36 *CET*, 15 May 1954.
  - 37 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 32, no. 1 (January-February, 1958), p. 35.
  - 38 The precise names of these sections can be found in *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 33, no. 3 (May-June 1959), p. 90.
  - 39 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 25, no. 4 (July-August, 1951), p. 88.
  - 40 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 6, no. 6 (Summer 1952), p. 122; vol. 13, no. 1 (February 1959); vol. 14, no. 1 (February 1960); MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/PER/WE/1, letter, P. Cleydon to Mr. K. Aspland, 4 January 1952.
  - 41 On the activities of the Tool Room social group, see, various issues of *Alfred Herbert News* of 1953 and 1954.
  - 42 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 11, no. 4 (June 1957), p. 165. The GEC rifle club had 80 members around the middle of 1950s; *Loudspeaker*, vol. 10, no. 8 (Christmas, 1956), p. 304.
  - 43 *Alfred Herbert News*, vol. 34, no. 2 (March-April, 1960), p. 39; *Loudspeaker*, vol. 13, no. 2 (Spring, 1959), p. 72.
  - 44 MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/CL/2, memorandum to all sections of the Standard Recreation Club, 5 October 1956.
  - 45 MRC, MSS.226/ST/3/A/CL/2, internal memorandum, secretary to the Recreation Club to the company solicitor, 15 October 1956.
  - 46 *BJG*, 18 September 1953.
  - 47 In 1955, the name of the league changed from the Bolton Workshop and Social Clubs Bowling League into the Bolton and District Bowling League. However, actual membership had been open to any local bowling team, whether attached to workshops and social clubs or not. See, *Green Final*, 22 January 1955.
  - 48 *BJG*, 18 September 1953.
  - 49 *Ibid.*
  - 50 *Ibid.*
  - 51 *BJG*, 18 October 1957. It was called the Eagley Mills Prize Band and had 15 members in 1951. See, 5 January 1951.
  - 52 *BJG*, 8 May 1953.
  - 53 *BJG*, 15 November 1957.
  - 54 Up to the late 1950s, the company's gift to its villagers had included a children's playing field, a

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- bowling green, and swimming baths. It also supported educational organisations. See, *BJG*, 15 November 1957.
- 55 C. H. Saxelby (ed.), *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 99.
- 56 *BJG*, 23 January 1959.
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 BCLA, FZ/32/5, minutes of the Executive Committee, 28 November 1959; *Tillotsons Bolton Directory for 1967* (Bolton, 1967), p. xivii.
- 59 *BJG*, 27 July 1951.
- 60 Apart from the usual one day excursions, there were special outings on such occasions as the Festival of Britain. About 600 employees of Messrs Mather and Platt's works visited the Festival by the train: *BJG*, 1 June 1951.
- 61 See regular advertisements in the local newspapers, which listed those dance parties.
- 62 *GF*, 21 February 1953.
- 63 *Buff*, 11 October 1958; *BJG*, 15 August 1958; *Buff*, 9 April 1960.
- 64 *BJG*, 12 October 1951; BCLA, FZ/32/20, minutes of the [Disciplinary] Sub Committee, 1 August 1952.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 12 October 1951.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 16 November 1951.
- 67 *Buff*, 30 April 1960.
- 68 See, BCLA, FZ/32/20, minutes of the [Disciplinary] Sub Committee, 5 September and 19 December 1952.
- 69 See, for example, *BJG*, 16 January and 6 February 1959.
- 70 *BJG*, 16 January 1959. See also, *BJG*, 13 February 1959.
- 71 BCLA, FZ/32/4, minutes of the Executive Committee, 20 February 1950, 4 February 1955 and 17 August 1956.
- 72 See, for example, BCLA, FZ/32/20, minutes of the [Disciplinary] Sub Committee, 4 January 1952, 29 August 1952 and 9 January 1953; BCLA, FZ/32/4 and 5, the Executive Committee minutes, 16 January 1950, 13 March 1950, 5 November 1951, 17 December 1954, 8 January 1960.
- 73 BCLA, FZ/32/5, minutes of the Executive Committee, 5 and 12 October 1956.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 20 June 1955.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 28 August 1959.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 8 January 1960.
- 77 For example, in 1952, an honorarium of £20 with £5 expenses was given to the secretary. For the assistant secretary, half that amount was given. See, BCLA, FZ/32/20, minutes of the [Disciplinary] committee, 23 May 1952.
- 78 *BJG*, 12 October 1951.
- 79 *GF*, 1 January 1955; *Buff*, 9 January 1960.
- 80 *BEN*, 9 June 1952; *BJG*, 28 April 1959.
- 81 *Buff*, 21 March 1959.
- 82 *BJG*, 25 January 1952.
- 83 *BJG*, 14 January 1955.
- 84 The chairman of the Astley Bridge Cricket Club, which had a loan for improved ground facilities, appreciated a women's committee's various efforts; *BJG*, 18 December 1953. About 30% of the Bradshaw Cricket Club's cricket

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- section's income of came from the women's committee's efforts in 1953; *BJG*, 22 January 1954.
- 85 *BJG*, 26 January 1954.
- 86 *BJG*, 27 February 1953 and 4 March 1955.
- 87 *BJG*, 6 March 1953.
- 88 *BJG*, 25 March 1955.
- 89 *BJG*, 11 May 1956.
- 90 *BJG*, 20 December 1957.
- 91 *BJG*, 20 February 1959. 59 new members joined, but 67 existing members were happy to let their membership lapse.
- 92 *BJG*, 11 May 1956.
- 93 *BJG*, 20 April 1956.
- 94 *BJG*, 26 April 1957.
- 95 *BJG*, 17 and 24 April 1959.
- 96 *BJG*, 11 May 1956.
- 97 *BJG*, 2 March 1956.
- 98 *Buff*, 28 February 1959. See also, *BJG*, 6 March 1960.
- 99 *BJG*, 29 February 1952; *BJG*, 27 February 1953; *BJG*, 14 January 1954.
- 100 *BJG*, 14 December 1956.
- 101 *BJG*, 1 March 1957.
- 102 *BJG*, 22 February and 22 March 1957.
- 103 *Buff*, 9 May 1959.
- 104 *BJG*, 2 July 1952.
- 105 *BJG*, 12 October 1951.
- 106 *GF*, 18 April 1953.
- 107 *GF*, 2 July 1955.
- 108 *GF*, 16 April 1955.
- 109 *Buff*, 21 March 1959.
- 110 *Buff*, 19 March 1960.
- 111 *BJG*, 12 February 1960.
- 112 R. Marks (ed.), *Bolton Sports Federation* (1990), p. 11.
- 113 *BJG*, 15 February 1952.
- 114 *GF*, 3 January 1953.
- 115 *GF*, 10 September 1955.
- 116 Marks, *Bolton Sports Federation* (1990), p. 11.
- 117 *BEN*, 9 October 1952.
- 118 Marks, *Bolton Sports Federation* (1990), p. 20; *GF*, 30 April 1955.
- 119 *Buff*, 26 April 1958.
- 120 *Buff*, 2 May 1959.
- 121 *GF*, 25 September 1954, 1 January 1955.
- 122 *GF*, 16 April 1955.
- 123 *GF*, 19 February 1955.
- 124 *GF*, 2 April 1955.
- 125 *Buff*, 3 January 1959 and 16 April 1960.
- 126 *GF*, 24 January 1953.
- 127 *GF*, 29 August 1953 and 18 September 1954.
- 128 *GF*, 8 January 1955.
- 129 *GF*, 8 October 1955; *Buff* 30 August 1958. In 1959, there were 403 registered players. See, *Buff*, 3 January 1959.
- 130 T. Harrisson, *Britain Revisited* (1961), p. 38.
- 131 *GF*, 30 April 1955; *Buff*, 27 February 1960.
- 132 *BJG*, 28 September 1951.
- 133 *Buff*, 15 February 1958.
- 134 *BJG*, 28 January 1955.

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- 135 See a league table in *GF*, 17 January 1953, for example.  
 136 *GF*, 22 January 1955.  
 137 *GF*, 16 April 1955.  
 138 *Buff*, 30 August 1958.  
 139 *Buff*, 15 February 1958.  
 140 *GF*, 30 May and 6 June 1953.  
 141 *GF*, 30 May 1953; *Buff*, 21 May 1960.  
 142 *GF*, 7 May 1955; *Buff*, 21 May 1960.  
 143 *Buff*, 17 May 1958 and 21 May 1960.  
 144 *BJG*, 20 July and 10 August 1951.  
 145 *BJG*, 22 May 1959.  
 146 *GF*, 3 April 1954; *Buff*, 27 February 1960.  
 147 *BJG*, 26 November 1954; *GF*, 21 May 1955; *Buff*, 18 October 1958 and 17 January 1959.  
 148 *BJG*, 28 September 1951; *GF*, 15 August 1953.  
 149 *GF*, 3 January 1953. The league had a healthy financial position with more than £50 in bank. See, *GF*, 3 August 1953.  
 150 *GF*, 14 August 1954.  
 151 *Buff*, 3 September 1960.  
 152 *GF*, 14 August 1954 and 11 June 1955.  
 153 *BJG*, 28 September 1951.  
 154 *GF*, 1 January 1955.  
 155 *GF*, 3 January 1953.  
 156 *Ibid.*  
 157 *GF*, 5 September 1953; *Buff*, 6 February 1960.  
 158 *GF*, 8 January 1955.  
 159 For example, see, *BEN*, 22 April 1952; *GF*, 17 January 1953; *GF*, 4 March 1955; *Buff*, 16 October and 19 November 1960. On one occasion, the St. Dunstan Women team went to Southport for an inter-league match, with 120 supporters. See, *GF*, 17 October 1953.  
 160 *Buff*, 8 February 1958. See also *Buff*, 2 March 1959.  
 161 *BJG*, 6 December 1957.  
 162 *GF*, 1 January 1953.  
 163 *GF*, 10 September 1955.  
 164 *Ibid.*; *Buff*, 2 January 1960.  
 165 *GF*, 10 April 1954.  
 166 *GF*, 10 September and 15 October 1955.  
 167 See, for example, *GF*, 2 October 1954.  
 168 *BJG*, 23 April 1954. There were three cycling clubs in the locality: the Bolton Cyclist Touring Club, the Clarion Cycling Club, and the St. Christopher's Catholic Cycling Club.  
 169 *BEN*, 3 January 1952; *BJG*, 9 November 1951; *BJG*, 24 April 1959.  
 170 *BEN*, 25 October 1952.  
 171 *Buff*, 31 January 1959.  
 172 *BJG*, 5 February 1960.  
 173 *Annual Report of the [Bolton] Chief Constable* (various years).  
 174 *BEN*, 11 October 1952.  
 175 *Ibid.*  
 176 *BJG*, 14 November 1958.  
 177 *BJG*, 4 October 1957.  
 178 *BJG*, 7 June 1957.  
 179 *BEN*, 13 March and 13 April 1956.

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- 180 *BJG*, 15 August 1958.  
181 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 107.  
182 *BEN*, 5 October 1958; Waller, Wilson and Ruddock, *After Work* (1959), the attached list.  
183 *Ibid.*  
184 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 107; Waller, Wilson and Ruddock, *After Work* (1959), the attached list.  
185 Waller, Wilson and Ruddock, *After Work* (1959), the attached list.  
186 *Ibid.*  
187 *Ibid.*  
188 *BJG*, 23 September 1960.  
189 Waller, Wilson and Ruddock, *After Work* (1959), the attached list.  
190 The society eventually secured a local cinema, the Lido, in 1962, as their venue for their one week annual productions. See, *BEN*, 21 May 1962.  
191 *BJG*, 4 October 1957.  
192 On the high expectations, of the Bolton Amateur Dramatic Society at that time, see, *BEN*, 21 January 1961.  
193 Saxelby, *Bolton Survey* (1953), p. 107; Waller, Wilson and Ruddock, *After Work* (1959), the attached list.  
194 *BJG*, 24 September 1954, and 2 August and 6 December 1957.  
195 Waller, Wilson and Ruddock, *After Work* (1959), the attached list.  
196 See, for example, *BJG*, 20 March 1953 and 3 February 1956.  
197 Waller, Wilson and Ruddock, *After Work* (1959), the attached list.  
198 CRO, CP, Parks Department, 'a list of cricket application, 1952', 'a list of Bowling Application, 1952' and 'a list of tennis court application, 1952', 3 March 1952; *ibid.*, Parks' Director's Monthly Report, 31 March 1952.  
199 CRO, CP, Monthly Report of Parks Director, 9 March 1953.  
200 *Ibid.*, 2 May and 6 April 1959.  
201 *CET*, 20 October 1951.  
202 *CET*, 15 October 1955.  
203 CRO, CP, Monthly Report of Parks Director, 23 February 1961.  
204 *Ibid.*, 2 March 1959 and 23 February 1961.  
205 CRO, CP, Monthly Report of Parks Director, 8 September 1958; *ibid.*, 22 September 1960.  
206 CRO, Acc 617, Coventry and District Football League, *Official Handbook, Season 1951-52*.  
207 CRO, Acc 617, Coventry and District Football League, minutes of the A.G.M., 2 June 1954.  
208 CRO, Acc 617, Coventry and District Football League, minutes of the adjourned A.G.M., 4 July 1956.  
209 CRO, Acc 617, Coventry and District Football League, *Official Handbook, Season 1951-52*.  
210 CRO, Acc 617, Coventry and District Football League, minutes of the committee, 5 September 1956.

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- 211 CRO, CP, Baths Superintendent, a list of record of attendance for swimming clubs, 5 September 1955.
  - 212 CRO, CP, Bath's Superintendent's Monthly Report, 28 November 1955.
  - 213 *CET*, 11 September 1957.
  - 214 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 4, no. 8 (January 1950), p. 9.
  - 215 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 4, no. 8 (January 1950), p. 9; vol. 6, no. 3 (August 1951).
  - 216 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 6, no. 9 (February 1952), p. 9.
  - 217 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 11, no. 5 (October 1956), p. 18.
  - 218 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 16, no. 5 (October 1961), p. 10.
  - 219 *CET*, 16 July 1960.
  - 220 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 6, no. 4 (September 1951), p. 10.
  - 221 *The Midland Angler*, vol. 8, no. 6 (November 1953), p. 9.
  - 222 *CET*, 18 April 1951.
  - 223 *What's on Coventry*, vol. 1, no. 9 (May 1956).
  - 224 For example, see *C.T.C. Gazette*, vol. 67, no. 2 (February 1948), p. 24.
  - 225 *C.T.C. Gazette*, vol. 74, no. 1 (January 1955), p. 26.
  - 226 *CET*, 17 April 1951.
  - 227 *CS*, 3 May 1957.
  - 228 *CET*, 2 September 1955.
  - 229 *CET*, 8 September 1955.
  - 230 *CET*, 27 July 1960.
  - 231 *CET*, 6 April 1951.
  - 232 *CET*, 20 April 1951.
  - 233 *CET*, 9 September 1955.
  - 234 *CET*, 9 December 1958.
  - 235 *CET*, 1 and 31 May 1951.
  - 236 *CET*, 18 October 1955.
  - 237 *CET*, 13 February 1960.
  - 238 *CS*, 8 October 1954.
  - 239 *CS*, 8 February 1957.
  - 240 *CS*, 15 November 1957 and W. Millinship, 'Coventry: Is This Our Future?', *Observer Magazine*, 14 November 1965, p. 23, cited by N. Tiratsoo, in his *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics* (1990), p. 111.
  - 241 City of Coventry, *1966 Review of the Development Plan: Analysis and Statement* (1967), p. 76.
  - 242 *CS*, 31 January 1958.
  - 243 *CS*, 22 August 1958; *CET*, 11 December 1958.
  - 244 *CS*, February 1958, 22 August 1958 and 4 December 1959.
  - 245 City of Coventry, *Coventry City Region* (April 1963), p. 21.
  - 246 *CS*, 31 January 1958.
  - 247 *CS*, 28 February 1958.
  - 248 As for Bolton, see, *BEN*, 27 August 1956. In the case of Coventry, see, Minutes of the Watch Committee, various dates after September 1956.
  - 249 The actual figures for television and sound broadcast licences were 44,896 and 42,748 respectively: *CET*, 15 September 1955.



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- 250 *CS*, 2 December 1960.
  - 251 *CET*, 13 April 1957.
  - 252 *CS*, 31 January 1958. The popularity of television in the Bell Green housing estate was also reported a year earlier: *CS*, 28 October 1955.
  - 253 *BJG*, 21 May 1954.
  - 254 For example, see a Bolton licensee's opinion about his preference for watching television to reading: *BJG*, 4 October 1957.
  - 255 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1957), p. 177.
  - 256 Ministry of Transport, *Road Motor Vehicles 1960* (1961), Table 9.
  - 257 The number of private households in Coventry in 1961 was 95,029: General Register Office, *Census 1961. England and Wales. County Report: Warwickshire* (1963), Table 3.
  - 258 See, J. C. Tanner, 'Car and Motorcycle Ownership in the Counties of Great Britain in 1960', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol. 126, Series A (General), Part 2 (1963), pp. 276-83.
  - 259 The number of private households in Bolton in 1961 was 56,423: General Register Office, *Census 1961. England and Wales. County Report: Lancashire* (1963), Table 3.
  - 260 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 10, no. 1 (February 1956), p. 34; vol. 10, no. 4 (June 1956), p. 141; vol. 12, no. 1 (February 1958), p. 32.
  - 261 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 6, no. 6 (Summer 1952), p. 138.
  - 262 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Spring 1957), p. 60.
  - 263 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 13, no. 4 (Autumn 1959), p. 227.
  - 264 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 5, no. 10 (Christmas 1951-New Year 1952), p. 207.
  - 265 *Ibid.*, p. 223.
  - 266 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 9, no. 5 (June 1955), p. 154.
  - 267 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 12, no. 1 (February 1958), p. 36.
  - 268 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 11, no. 5 (Summer 1957), p. 224.
  - 269 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 6, no. 9 (November 1952), p. 221.
  - 270 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 9, no. 1 (February 1955), p. 34.
  - 271 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 10, no. 4 (June 1956), p. 141.
  - 272 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 5, no. 2 (May 1951), p. 40.
  - 273 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 12, no. 2 (March 1958), p. 64.
  - 274 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 8, no. 6 (Summer 1954), pp. 148-49 and vol. 8, no. 8 (October 1954), p. 208.
  - 275 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 9, no. 6 (Summer 1955), p. 200.
  - 276 *Loudspeaker*, vol. 12, no. 1 (February 1958), p. 38.
  - 277 *BJG*, 22 June 1951.
  - 278 *BJG*, 6 July 1951.
  - 279 *BJG*, 24 June 1960. Filey and Pwllheli, both Butlin's camps constantly attracted 2,000 Bolton holiday makers. See *BJG*, 2 July 1954 and 6 July 1956.
  - 280 *BJG*, 13 February 1953.
  - 281 The others were Liverpool and Coventry during 1951, then in the following year, Halifax, Bolton, Oldham, Carlisle and Wigan. See, The National Playing Fields Association, *Annual Report and Accounts 1951*, p. 25 and 1952, p. 28.
  - 282 *BJG*, 8 July 1955.
  - 283 *Ibid.*

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- 284 BEN, 1 January 1952. The claims of the United Textile Workers' Association were fully granted by the Industrial Disputes Tribunal in the very beginning of 1952.
- 285 BEN, 10 April 1952.
- 286 BEN, 25 June 1952.
- 287 BEN, 7 July 1952.
- 288 BEN, 26 June 1952.
- 289 BEN, 18 June 1956.
- 290 BJG, 1 July 1955.
- 291 BJG, 25 June 1954.
- 292 Harrisson, *Britain Revisited* (1961), p. 146.
- 293 BJG, 24 June 1960. See also, *ibid.*, 12 July 1957.
- 294 *Classified Telephone Directory, Trades and Professions, Coventry Area* (April 1948); *ibid.*, (May 1960).
- 295 4 August 1951.
- 296 CET, 30 July 1960.
- 297 CS, 27 July 1956.
- 298 CS, 12 July 1957.
- 299 CET, 23 July 1960.
- 300 CET, 28 July 1960. A remarkable lack of support for weekday shopping in the city centre was observed by Bolton businessmen in 1962. A Coventry trader, agreeing with their view, replied: 'you can only judge by Friday and Saturday trading. You cannot move in the upper precinct on Saturdays'. See, CET, 1 February 1962.

### Conclusion

It seems best to start this conclusion by summarising the main trends of leisure in post-war Britain. In summarising the main characteristics of urban working-class leisure patterns, some debates on the nature of the post-war working class will be re-assessed.

Traditionally, British public opinion believed that people's spare time should be left to themselves, with minimum intervention from the state. However, after the war Government intervention in leisure certainly increased, particularly in the late forties and the late fifties. The Labour Government passed several pieces of legislation related to leisure, such as the Town Planning Act of 1947, the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Acts of 1949, and probably most importantly the Local Government Act of 1948, of which Section 132 gave local authorities permission to spend a sixpenny rate for the purpose of municipal entertainments. Both Labour and Conservative governments gave support to the entertainments industry, by making public money available, or by reducing the incidence of entertainments tax. On the other hand, under the austerity of the early post-war years, many state controls over recreational goods and entertainments services were loosened but little, and some were even tightened. It was only late in the 1950s that Government restrictions on expenditure by both local government and voluntary

organisations on recreational, social and sports facilities were lifted.

There was a good deal of difference in attitudes towards leisure between Labour and Conservative governments. Labour took a more interventionist stance, advocating a positive role for both central and local government in encouraging people's enjoyment of leisure. Arguably, under the Labour Government, leisure provision began to be regarded as part of the welfare state. However, Labour's actual achievement was limited to creating the basic legal framework which would encourage the public sector to take a more positive stance over the question of people's leisure.

Conservative Governments subscribed to the idea that people's spare time was best looked after by either commerce or the voluntary sector. They ended state monopoly in the licensing trade in new towns and in television broadcasting. Conservative Governments discouraged local government and voluntary organisations from making use of public money for leisure until the very end of the fifties. The inadequate level of state financing for leisure under the Conservatives seriously hampered the further development of leisure services administered by these agencies. Changing social circumstances, particularly increased public attention to the 'bulge' of the youth population and their 'problems', and accompanied pressure from concerned bodies and opposition Parties, finally forced the Government to take action over the inadequate level and arrangements of state support for the arts, sports and youth service. Some scholars have argued that Labour was less sympathetic

towards people's leisure, especially that of youth, than the Conservatives.<sup>1</sup> This study suggests the reverse is true.

Within the constraint imposed by central government, local government played an important role. As the case studies of Coventry and Bolton show, local government gradually expanded its leisure services in the post-war period. Coventry eventually succeeded in erecting a new civic theatre and an art gallery/museum in the central area, while expanding more neighbourhood-oriented services at the same time. In Bolton, although municipal intervention in leisure was less spectacular than in Coventry, the Town Council became a fairly large supplier of entertainments and culture by the end of the 1950s, sometimes competing with the commercial sector. Save for the traditional leisure services like public parks and libraries, all the new civic leisure services of the period became available under the Local Government Act of 1948. As we have seen, the facilities and services supported by the two local governments varied considerably. Local cultural tradition, the existence or not of war damage, and the different political climates were probably the main contributors to these differences.

Despite increased public sector intervention, in terms of popular appeal the roles of both central and local government were fairly limited. Their responsibility in leisure was confined largely to services related to education, health and land use. The commercial sector was

more important than the public sector in providing leisure. Both in Bolton and Coventry, cinemas, public houses, dance halls, sport and racing stadiums attracted more people than the public sector did.

There were substantial changes in the commercial leisure worlds themselves. The changing patterns were very similar in both our towns. Within a few years after the war, the boom for 'traditional' types of entertainment, cinemas, pubs and spectator sports, was over. This coincided with the beginning of the end of rationing, and probably with the resettlement of many ex-soldiers. The warlike atmosphere was finally over, and normal civilian life returned. People began to reconstruct their ordinary pattern of life. Priority returned to house, food and various consumer goods as in the pre-war years. By the end of the forties, there was also a good deal of evidence, especially in Coventry, that people had become more selective than ever in their choice of leisure. Public houses were losing potential customers to the nearby social clubs established by the residents themselves, and the large city centre cinemas had more pulling power than local cinemas.

This trend continued in the 1950s. The relative monopoly position, particularly of cinemas and pubs, became seriously undermined by the emergence of other types of entertainment. In both towns, dancing remained popular throughout the 1950s, and the local travel industry was doing well. With higher wages, people were tempted by more expensive and newer goods and services, such as television sets, cars and annual holidays, with which only first-class

and luxurious commercial entertainments could compete. Without constant renovation and innovation in facilities and provision, the survival of many 'traditional' leisure types became difficult. Under the improvement in material circumstances, especially in the late 1950s, people's expectations in leisure certainly rose, and these changing expectations seemed to hit the small local leisure entrepreneurs, who often found it difficult to find adequate resources to finance the necessary modernisation. Increased competition saw the process of rationalisation, and concentration within each leisure industry accelerated. It was the only way to guarantee survival. Towards the end of the fifties, business diversification was also stepped up, as seen in the drink trade and the audio apparatus industry. In the case of commercial television broadcasting, conglomeration was evident from the first.

However, it is a mistake to pay too much attention to commercial developments and neglect more informal types of leisure.<sup>2</sup> The importance of home in people's leisure, in terms both of time and place, has tended to be neglected in the history of leisure, partly because of the difficulty in collecting reliable evidence. However, as the testimony of GEC workers in Coventry showed, the importance of the home in people's leisure was undoubtedly the most common feature for the great majority of working-class people, while there was a great diversity in their specific preference of hobbies and style.

At first glance, this seems to confirm the thesis put forward by Goldthorpe and others: the characteristics of affluent workers' leisure were to be found in their 'home- and family-centredness' and 'privatisation'.<sup>3</sup> Their findings and those of this study are broadly in agreement. However, there are serious weaknesses in their range of sample and interpretation. Their sample was limited to couples whose husband's age was between 21 and 46. Furthermore, 91 per cent of the couples had at least one child who was predominantly younger and still at secondary school.<sup>4</sup> This concentration of sample on a stage in the family- or life-cycle when spare money tended to contract and spare time be given up for child rearing, gives less credit to one of their central arguments. It is little wonder that their sample couples were home and family bound. This study shows that leisure patterns often differed considerably according to age, life stage and familial situation, as well as gender, locality, ethnicity and class divisions within the working class itself.

Another point which should be made is that family- and home-centred leisure was not a novel phenomenon of the affluent 1950s. In addition to contemporary surveys and observations, there are an increased number of secondary works, which argue that 'home- and family-centred' or 'privatised' leisure styles among working-class families were not new phenomenon but had existed since a much earlier period.<sup>5</sup> Although more research is needed, the evidence so far suggests that home-centred leisure is probably 'traditional' itself.



Goldthorpe and others also demonstrated that working-class membership of clubs and societies was lower than that of middle-classes people, and that the type of clubs which affluent workers joined were qualitatively different from those of the middle class. It was reported that membership of clubs and associations among 'affluent' workers were 48 per cent among husbands and 37 per cent among their wives. Taking into account the fact that they were at a stage in the life-cycle which made engaging in any out-of-home leisure activities difficult, this could be regarded as a high participation rate. Moreover, there was no evidence that these figures were lower than those for manual workers in other areas or lower than those in former times. As the case study of Coventry and Bolton showed, throughout the forties and fifties, many associational forms of leisure activity sustained their vitality as before. The prime example was the growth of social clubs where people valued the inexpensive drinks, the sociability and, most of all, the sense of 'our' place, with all of which pubs found it difficult to compete. As far as leisure is concerned, people's initiative is no less impressive than that of the leisure industry. The fact that associational form of leisure flourished more in Coventry than in Bolton suggests that affluence might have positively contributed to its expansion. In this light, the neo-Marxist view that leisure in post-war Britain was a capitalist instrument of control over workers who are alienated from the production process and that the leisure world became dominated by passive

consumerism remains unconvincing.<sup>6</sup> Leisure was not 'autonomous' nor 'oppositional' in any way, but its self-determined nature impressively continued to exist.

The strong persistence of home-centred leisure and leisure in associational forms among the post-war urban working-class population also cast doubt on the assumption that leisure culture of the 'traditional' working-class was wearing away in the 1950s.<sup>7</sup> Although it has often been speculated that 'traditional' commercial leisure was killed by the coming of passive home-centred television,<sup>8</sup> there is no evidence which would demonstrate that the balance of leisure outside the home and inside changed between 1945-1960. Any explanation of the decline of 'traditional' commercial leisure should take into account the following point: immediate post-war boom of the 'traditional' commercial leisure sector was an artificial one created by the unusual wartime circumstances. In this light, the partial change in priority of spending from 'traditional' leisure to consumer goods is not surprising.

The relationship between work and leisure has also attracted attention of historians. Gareth Stedman Jones argued that the nature of working-class culture changed from work-centred to leisure-centred in the late 19th century. This has been offered as an explanation for the increasing apolitical nature of modern British workers.<sup>9</sup> From the late 1950s, similar observation that the people's central interest in life shifted from work to leisure was often aired. The matter, however, seems more complicated. Firstly,

despite the reduction in normal working hours in the post-war period, there was no appreciable reduction in actual working hours between the late 1940s and 1960 as the official statistics show. In fact, an average adult male worker in manufacturing industry worked slightly longer by the end of the 1950s than in 1938. There is no evidence that people willingly gave up their overtime work in order to secure more leisure. People were more likely to give up leisure, and to work overtime. Secondly, this study suggests that the more prosperous the industrial town was, the more vigorous was its 'occupational culture'. In Coventry works recreation did not decline but thrived in the post-war period, while it was not the case in Bolton. This 'occupational culture' continued to exist, though it was operating highly independently from the company's management. Overall, there is no evidence that British workers became less committed to work, nor that people's leisure increasingly became an expression of opposition to work.

It seems that the activities and meanings of leisure were elastic, subordinating to various other elements of life. Work is just one of them. In general, leisure and its meaning changed as one's life stage and style changed. Leisure seems a complex phenomenon in which psychological aspects such as personal and social identity probably play significant roles.<sup>10</sup>

### Notes to Conclusion

- 1 N. Tiratsoo, 'Popular Politics, Affluence and the Labour Party in the 1950s', in A. Gorst, L. Johnman and W. S. Lucas (ed.), *Contemporary British History 1931-1961* (1991), pp. 44-61.
- 2 Andrew Davies stressed this point in his *Leisure, Gender and Poverty* (1992).
- 3 J. H. Goldthorpe and others, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure* (1969).
- 4 See, *ibid.*, pp. 48 and 127-31.
- 5 For example, see, A. Franklin, 'Working-Class Privatism: an Historical Case Study of Bedminster, Bristol', *Environment and Planning, D: Society and Space*, vol. 7 (1989), pp. 93-113; M. Daunton, 'Public Place and Private space: the Victorian City and the Working-Class Household', in D. Frazer and A. Sutcliffe (ed.), *The Pursuit of Urban History* (1983), pp. 212-33; R. McKibbin, 'Work and Hobbies in Britain, 1880-1950' in his *The Ideologies of Class. Social Relations in Britain 1880-1950* (Oxford, 1990), chapter 5; L. Murfin, *Popular Leisure in the Lake Counties* (Manchester, 1990). G. Crow and G. Allan have published critical and useful survey articles on the question. See, their, 'Privatization, Home-Centredness and Leisure', *Leisure Studies*, vol. 10 (1991), pp. 19-23, and 'Constructing the Domestic Sphere: The Emergence of the Modern Home in Post-War Britain', in H. Corr and L. Jamieson (ed.), *Politics of Everyday Life* (1990), pp. 11-36.
- 6 Among the works which supported this theoretical stance, see, J. Clarke, 'Capital and Culture: the Post-War Working Class Revisited', in J. Clarke, C. Critcher and R. Johnson (ed.), *Working Class Culture. Studies in History and Theory* (1979), Chapter 10; J. Clarke and C. Critcher, *The Devil Makes Work. Leisure in Capitalist Britain* (1985); C. Rojek, *Capitalism and Leisure* (1985); T. Blackwell and J. Seabrook, *A World Still to Win. The Reconstruction of the Post-War Working Class* (1985).
- 7 E. J. Hobsbawm, 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?', in M. Jacques and F. Mulhern (ed.), *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* (1981), pp. 7-8. This view is more fully expressed in his 'The Formation of British Working-Class Culture', in his *Worlds of Labour* (1984), chapter 10.
- 8 For example, Anthony Sutcliffe and Roger Smith's history of Birmingham subscribes to this view. See, the chapter IX in their *History of Birmingham, Volume III, 1939-1970* (1974).

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- 9 G. Stedman Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1890-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', in his *Language of Class. Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983).
- 10 On the importance of these aspects, see, J. R. Kelly, *Leisure Identities and Interactions* (1983).

## **APPENDIX**

**Table A: The total amount offered by the Ministry of Education to local authorities and voluntary organisations in respect of playing fields schemes in England and Wales, 1949-1960.**

year	amount (£)
1949-50	379,390
50-51	157,496
51-52	77,109
52-53	27,553
53-54	3,622
54-55	2,004
55-56	135,793
56-57	154,163
57-58	83,770
1958	69,024 (9 months up to December)
1959	75,467
1960	51,905

[source: Up to 1957-58, the figures were those for the financial year ending March 31st: PRO, CB 3/175, letter, G. A. Dinomore, MoE, to R. B. Gooch, the National Playing Fields Association, 20 January 1959. The calendar year figures for 1959 and 1960 are taken from *Annual Report and Accounts 1959* (p. 25) and *1960* (p. 26), for the National Playing Fields Association.]

**Table B: Total grants from the Ministry of Education towards the youth service, 1946-1960.**

year	total grants (£)
1946-47	272,291
47-48	274,684
48-49	297,803
49-50	311,165
50-51	266,294
51-52	264,167
52-53	212,572
53-54	191,811
54-55	187,481
55-56	190,440
56-57	258,379
57-58	317,771
58-59	224,751
59-60	331,764

note: The reason why the figure for 1958-59 is substantially low is that from that financial year, the grant made to the Central Council of Physical Recreation, which was the largest amount, was no longer calculated under the youth service grant. The figure for 1959-60 is based on the figures in Cmnd. 1088, *Education in 1959* (1960), p. 55. The figure does not include the expenditure for training of youth leaders which was probably no more than £10,000.

[source: Cmnd. 929, *The Youth Service in England and Wales* (1960), Appendix 3. ]



**Table C: Recreational and social facilities available in Coventry, 1938-51.**

facilities	1938	1943	1948	1951
<b>(public)</b>				
football pitches	38	7	35	62
cricket pitches	17	1	5	-
tennis courts	88	75	94	101
bowling green	12	9	11	12
putting greens	-	-	3	-
miniature golf course (pitch and putt)	1	nil	nil	-
hockey pitches	-	8	nil	2
netball pitches	-	1	nil	1
cycle track, sports stadium, etc.	1	nil	1	1
public swimming baths	3	nil	1	1
theatre (Technical College)	1	1	1	1
<b>(commercial)</b>				
theatres	2	1	1	1
cinemas	22	19	19	19
private swimming baths	2	2	2	2
dance halls	6	3	-	-
skating rinks	3	2	-	-

[source: CRO, Acc 240/1/15, 'A Wartime Social Survey on the need for Provision of Additional Cultural and Recreational Facilities in the City of Coventry, undertaking by the Coventry Sports and Social Association at the request of the Ministry of Labour and National Service' (September 1943); CRO, Committee Papers, memorandum for Policy Advisory Committee, 'Playing Spaces and Facilities available in Coventry', 8 January 1948; *Civic Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 9 (September 1951), p. 3.]

**Table D: Municipal recreational facilities in Bolton, 1948.**

facilities	number
football pitches	31
rugby football	nil
cricket pitches	14
tennis courts	52
bowling greens	21
putting greens	1
pitch and put course	1
golf course	1
miniature golf course	1
hockey pitches	9
netball pitches	nil
athlete track and area	1
swimming baths	

[source: H. Hamer (ed.), *The Book of Bolton* (1948), pp. 50-52.]

**Table E: Number of the users of the Foleshill Public Bath, Coventry, 1939-1960, year ending 31st March.**

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	number of users
<hr/>	
1939	126,191
40	81,799
41	77,958
42	nil
43	1,435
44	13,495
45	23,807
46	24,617
47	144,768
48	199,151
49	233,161
50	262,740
51	232,323
52	268,339
53	307,620
54	316,335
55	351,190
56	361,441
57	405,109
58	347,622
59	380,573
60	376,792

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note: Foleshill was the only municipal bath which had a swimming pool between 1946 and 1960. The above figures included the number of the bathers at the 20 slipper baths for men and 15 for women at the Foleshill public baths.

[source: City of Coventry, *Municipal Handbook* (various years) ]

**Table F: Statistics for Coventry public libraries, 1938-1960.**

Year ended 31st March	Home Reading Issue	% of Registered Readers to Population
1938-39	1,000,958	17.00
39-40	900,471	15.50
40-42	647,105	n.a.
42-43	724,728	n.a.
43-44	843,172	n.a.
44-45	935,555	n.a.
45-46	1,006,065	n.a.
46-47	1,030,287	16.37
47-48	1,170,015	20.88
48-49	1,328,413	20.29
49-50	1,439,995	20.76
50-51	1,461,160	22.69
51-52	1,489,298	22.28
52-53	1,506,037	22.15
53-54	1,572,595	23.36
54-55	1,594,769	23.25
55-56	1,672,516	22.69
56-57	1,838,610	23.84
57-58	1,971,310	24.43
58-59	2,073,771	25.05
59-60	2,267,443	25.51
60-61	2,268,870	n.a.

note: 1940-42 figure is for November 1940 to March 1942. The figures for Home Reading Issues do not include those for school libraries.

[source: *The Coventry Libraries, Annual Reports and Statistics* (various years); *City of Coventry, Municipal Handbook* (various years).]

**Table G: Statistics for Bolton public libraries, 1938-1960.**

Year ended 31st March	Home Reading Issue	% of Registered Readers to Population
1938-39	1,636,512	38.6
39-40	1,442,872	n.a.
40-41	1,527,559	n.a.
40-42	1,600,290	n.a.
42-43	1,693,971	n.a.
43-44	n.a.	n.a.
44-45	1,639,800	35.8
45-46	n.a.	n.a.
46-47	n.a.	n.a.
47-48	n.a.	n.a.
48-49	1,472,033	36.8
49-50	1,375,437	36.2
50-51	1,339,377	33.3
51-52	1,501,756	34.5
52-53	1,511,612	n.a.
53-54	1,447,504	n.a.
54-55	1,407,747	33.1
55-56	1,376,431	33.3
56-57	1,298,736	32.2
57-58	1,355,519	31.9
58-59	1,469,873	32.7
59-60	1,563,127	32.4
60-61	1,509,822	32.3

[source: CBB, *Annual Report of the Public Libraries* (various years). The figures for 1952-53 and 1953-54 are taken from CBB, *Abstract of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March* (various years). ]

**Table H: Licensed premises in Coventry, 1946-60.**

year	on licensed	off licensed	registered clubs
1946	243	112	100
47	243	113	106
48	243	114	110
49	243	115	114
50	243	128	118
51	244	128	119
52	244	128	123
53	244	128	125
54	244	131	124
55	247	134	132
56	249	138	132
57	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
58	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
59	253	141	139
60	257	143	146

note: Licensed premises each year include 26 (apart from for 1951, 24) suspended licences, where the sites were not being used owing to damage.

[source: City of Coventry, *Report of the Chief Constable* (various years).]

Table I: Licensed premises in Bolton, 1946-60.

year	on licensed	off licensed	social and recreational clubs	political clubs
1946	293	156	32	29
47	293	156	32	29
48	293	155	34	29
49	291	157	33	29
50	284	173	34	29
51	283	173	35	29
52	280	173	36	31
53	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
54	279	173	34	31
55	282	168	34	31
56	279	173	35	31
57	275	166	36	29
58	274	166	36	28
59	270	165	42	28
60	262	169	41	26

[source: CBB, *Chief Constable's Annual Report* (various years).]

**Table J: Average attendance per Home Football League game, Coventry City F.C., 1945-1960.**

season	attendances	final position
1945-46	13,223	13th, Football League South
46-47	19,965	8th, Division Two
47-48	22,510	10th, ditto
48-49	22,340	16th, ditto
49-50	22,838	12th, ditto
50-51	26,683	7th, ditto
51-52	22,536	21st, ditto
52-53	13,413	6th, Division Three South
53-54	10,488	14th, ditto
54-55	14,163	9th, ditto
55-56	17,638	8th, ditto
56-57	13,650	16th, ditto
57-58	11,864	19th, ditto
58-59	16,912	2nd, Division Four
59-60	16,312	4th, Division Three

[source: the figures are calculated based on statistics in R. Dean (compiled), *Coventry City: The Complete Record 1988-1991* (1991).]



**Table K: Average attendance per Home Football League game, Bolton Wanderers F.C., 1945-1960.**

season	attendance	final position
1945-46	18,147	3rd, Football League North
46-47	28,594	18th, Division One
47-48	29,408	17th, ditto
48-49	34,112	14th, ditto
49-50	29,789	16th, ditto
50-51	33,142	8th, ditto
51-52	35,832	5th, ditto
52-53	32,066	14th, ditto
53-54	33,739	5th, ditto
54-55	28,370	18th, ditto
55-56	27,964	8th, ditto
56-57	25,218	9th, ditto
57-58	22,029	15th, ditto
58-59	27,658	4th, ditto
59-60	26,045	6th, ditto
60-61	21,669	18th, ditto

[source: the figures are calculated based on statistics in S. Marland, *Bolton Wanderers: A Complete Record 1877-1989* (Derby, 1989).]

**Table L: Coventry greyhound stadium: Annual totalisator turnover, 1945-59.**

year	turnover (£)
1945	1,710,690
46	2,480,619
47	1,529,244
48	1,070,031
49	778,250
50	487,123
52	511,197
53	462,451
56	409,960
57	379,040
58	349,802
59	333,092

[sources: C. Chisholm (ed.), *Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom* (editions 1948 and 1951); CRO, CP, statements of accounts for operation of the totalisator at Coventry Stadium (various year); the figures for 1956 and 1957 were estimated based on the figure in *HC Debs*, vol. 599, col. 546, 5 February 1959.]

**Table M: Bolton greyhound stadium: Annual totalisator turnover, 1945-48.**

year	turnover
1945	429,744 (£)
46	647,288
47	449,300
48	407,906

[source: C. Chisholm (ed.), *Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom* (1948), p. 156. and its 1951 edition, p. 127.]

**Table N: The numbers of users of some municipal sports facilities in Bolton, 1945-1960.**

year	total numbers of bowls players	total numbers of tennis players	total number of rounds of golf
1944-45	107,510	17,941	n.a.
45-46	127,067	29,803	n.a.
46-47	149,909	47,733	18,636
47-48	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
48-49	122,162	51,111	19,206
49-50	146,282	55,346	28,291
50-51	114,287	49,231	21,531
51-52	110,538	55,582	24,060
52-53	117,818	61,882	28,382
53-54	109,286	49,754	21,585
54-55	93,510	38,430	18,405
55-56	104,908	28,950	17,333
56-57	79,771	40,052	17,648
57-58	84,466	39,418	22,000
58-59	86,429	43,504	18,525
59-60	102,708	41,752	27,218

[source: CBB, *Year Book* (various years).]

**Table O: Numbers of visitors, the art gallery and museums in Bolton, 1948-61.**

year	central museum and art gallery	Hall i'th' Wood museum
1948-49	172,307	20,899
49-50	122,886	19,938
50-51	150,097	15,588
51-52	151,674	16,301
52-53	153,738	18,109
53-54	171,118	19,159
54-55	156,121	14,469
55-56	140,977	15,280
56-57	142,085	10,759
57-58	133,378	14,833
58-59	156,928	15,015
59-60	146,538	15,636
60-61	136,446	14,240

note: the new central museum and art gallery opened to the public in October 1947. The figures for 1950-51 to 1953-54 includes visitors to the aquarium, which was situated in the basement of the central library.

[source: CBB, *Year Book* (various years).]

**Table P: Average attendances at Bolton "Winter Gardens" event, 1947-60.**

season	number of concerts held	total attendance	average weekly attendance
1947-48	28	21,221	816
48-49	28	30,798	1,099
49-50	29	28,183	972
50-51	28	30,943	1,105
51-52	27	28,432	1,053
52-53	30	30,143	1,004
53-54	28	25,497	910
54-55	25	27,205	1,088
55-56	24	28,354	1,181
56-57	26	28,515	1,096
57-58	26	22,821	877
58-59	26	19,914	766
59-60	22	18,989	863

[source: BCLA, ABCF/1/17, a list of attendance for the Winter Gardens, 8 February 1961.]

**Table Q: Statistics on Bolton civic dances, 1950-63.**

season	number of dances held	total attendance	average weekly attendance
1950-51	20	11,645	582
51-52	31	21,599	696
52-53	34	23,452	689
53-54	39	26,505	679
54-55	39	25,098	643
55-56	40	27,568	689
56-57	48	33,450	696
57-58	54	32,065	593
58-59	n.a.	n.a.	650
62-63	n.a.	n.a.	500

note: figures for 1959-62 are not available.

[source: CBB, *Abstract of Accounts* (various years); ABCF/1/19, notes at a meeting of sub-committee's of Finance and Entertainments Committee, 15 August 1963.]

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*National Parks Commission*

*Catering Wages Commission*

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